

YOUTH BUS

This is now coming to the area following our requests (Focus 186).

It is coming on a fortnightly basis, from 6.30 to 8.00 p.m. to the car park to the rear of the Elm Tree shops, and the next date is Tuesday 13th March, and it will be fortnightly after that.

SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS SETBACK

Although the Cabinet member did say that he would look to see if the

Darlington Back Lane / Felton Lane pedestrian crossing could be included in next year's spending programme there has been a big set back.

The Government (and we know who runs that!) has given the Council nearly *quarter of a million pounds LESS* for the coming year than last year. This means that for now this scheme is on the backburner for a while.

Julia and Suzanne will keep on looking for ways for this to go ahead, but will not promise what may not be possible.

This cut back is not good news for **THE VALE** footpath that needs to be made up at the entrance of that road from Darlington Lane either.

SKATEBOARDING

The mobile skate board park will be at the rear of Elm Tree Community Centre on Tuesday April 10th, 9.30 to 3.30. It is free of charge, helmets and pads are provided, and there are some skateboards for free loan. Come along and enjoy!



POSTAL VOTING

Do you need a postal vote ? If you are likely to be away from home for work or holidays on Thursday May 3rd, or if you will find it difficult to get to a polling station on the day, then you can apply for a postal vote. Don't leave it till the last minute, but the very last time for putting in an application is Wednesday April 18th. Anyone who has had a postal vote previously will need to apply again under new Government rules.

DARLINGTON BACK LANE / THE WILLOWS

Julia and Suzanne have recently visited some of the new residents here. This issue of parking on the pavement was discussed and we learned that sometimes the residents simply cannot get their cars past the building machinery to their garages. All of those we talked to about it realised that it is a problem.

Until the footpath was "adopted" by the council it was classed as private land, owned by the developer, and as such the general public did not have any right of way. That made it impossible to take any action against people parking there. After much pressure from Suzanne the Council adopted the Highway on March 8th.

This does not usually happen until at least twelve months after the building work has finished and so shows how seriously the problem was taken. Now adoption has taken place the police and enforcement team can take action against offenders.

SNIPPETS:

Suzanne has reported obscene graffiti on the **Ludham Grove** street sign but here's Julia trying to clean it off first.....Broken glass on the pavement behind **Maplin View** has been reported and swept up....the broken street sign on **Brundall Close** has been reported....



Flooding on the path from **Woodborough Lane** to Sainsbury's is once again causing problems and Suzanne is taking this up with the store....By Laws to help the running of **Hardwick Dene**, and make it a better place for visiting residents, wildlife, and plants are being held up by a Government Department....Reminders have been sent about the important need for a seat in the bus shelter on **Elm Tree Avenue** by **Lanark Close**. Also about the need for bus shelters on **Darlington Lane** near to **The Vale**.

FOCUS is paid for local Liberal Democrats, not by your Council Tax or Income Tax. It is delivered by unpaid volunteers - give them a smile when you see them! If you would like to help in any way then do get in touch.

Local elections are coming in May this year - so beware of dirty tricks from others!

BISHOPSGARTH & ELM TREE

FOCUS

www.stocktonlibdems.org.uk

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SURE START CENTRE UPDATE

Planning permission has now been given, so if all the other Agencies agree, then work could start on March 26th. The first phase will be around the existing meeting room, so that room may have to be closed for some activities for about 8 weeks starting at the end of March. If you have any queries you can contact the Community Centre on 862090.



If all goes to plan a long awaited facility for young families will be available by September, as well as more and better facilities at the Community Centre. Julia and Suzanne are looking forward to seeing the better facilities having done so much work over the last twelve months.



Julia and Suzanne at a Sure Start meeting.

JULIA AND SUZANNE – YOUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES ON STOCKTON COUNCIL – WORKING TOGETHER, FOR YOU, WITH YOU.

SCHOOL PARKING UPDATE

Parking around Whitehouse School continues to be a problem and we receive lots of complaints from local residents about this. We have asked the parking enforcement team to visit at peak times to see what can be done. Neither of us wants to see fines being issued and Julia has met with the school to discuss how their School Travel Plan can be updated to improve the situation. Various suggestions have been put forward and we will be working with the school to implement these. In the meantime, if you have any ideas, please let Julia know



BRIARDENE WALK FENCE

Julia and Suzanne are both pleased to see that the continually damaged section of wooden fence on Briardene Walk / Castle Eden Walkway has been replaced with metal palisade fencing. This will prove to be much more economical in the long term as it will not get so much damage and vandalism. However, following comments from a local resident we are hoping to have the area planted with Thorn Whips which will both make the area look better and also deter any wrong doers.

TEA AFTERNOON - Come and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, and take the opportunity to have a look round Stockton Town Hall, with the proceeds going to the EVE Appeal (Ovarian Cancer research). Only £3.00. **Wednesday March 21st**, from 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

WORKING FOR YOU ALL YEAR ROUND !

COUNCIL BUDGET

A recent meeting of Stockton Council approved an increase of 3.9% for the Council's share of your council tax. Liberal Democrats, along with other opposition parties wanted to change the Labour party proposal. Over quarter of a million pounds each year will be spent by the Council to change the way people contact them and bringing in a telephone call centre. The Liberal Democrat group believe that the money could be better spent on those things that officers put forward that you tell us are important to you – out of hours noise service, stray dogs and as well as homelessness and domestic violence services.

Unfortunately, the Labour councillors voted against the proposals and so our proposal was lost.



GREEN ISSUES

GREEN WASTE COLLECTION

We are delighted that the experimental "Green Waste Collection Service" will become a Borough wide initiative from April 2007. We had been calling for it to cover the whole area for a number of years. All of the Green Waste collected is recycled and turned into compost which Care For Your Area re-use on flower beds, parks etc. Compost 'give away' days are also organised at the Household Waste Centre at Haverton Hill. These will be advertised by the Council when they happen, and we will post details on our website when we receive them.

Green Waste Bags and leaflets with calendars will be delivered in March and collections start with effect from Tuesday 10th April 2007 until 16th November 2007.

Any queries regarding the scheme, please telephone Richard Bradley, Care For Your Area Services Manager, 391959 or e-mail Richard.Bradley@stockton.gov.uk or contact Julia or Suzanne.

TOO MUCH PACKAGING

Liberal Democrat MPs in Westminster and Europe have campaigned for years for new rules on packaging so that there is less of it and it is easier to recycle. It is appalling that 4.6 million tonnes a year were in household waste last year. The campaign continues.

RECYCLING

Local Liberal Democrats found that lots of leaflets were dumped in cardboard boxes at the recycling centre at Preston Park. With the help of Fiona Hall, Member for the European Parliament all the paper was tipped into paper recycling banks. However Fiona said "This would be an ideal place to at least start to collect cardboard for recycling. It would save people having to go all the way to Haverton Hill if there were more local collection points".



We will continue to press for recycling of plastics.

Problems, Queries, Ideas & Views.

Suzanne and Julia will be holding their ward surgery at **Elm Tree Community Centre** Tuesday 3rd April 6.00 pm to 7.00pm

NO youth surgery this month due to building works

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)



WEB SITE You can now keep up to date with news from your local Liberal Democrats by logging on to 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.

Fiona and Julia at the recycling bank in Preston Park



LAUDER HOUSE UPDATE

Following a recent ballot of tenants, sheltered housing at Lauder House will transfer to Erimus Housing within the next few months. All sheltered housing tenants in the Borough were invited to vote on the transfer and, of those who replied, 87% voted in favour of the transfer and 13% against it. New kitchens, bathrooms and communal areas will be a feature of the refurbishment. Julia and Suzanne have attended most of the meetings at Lauder House, listened to the residents, and have been very happy to support tenants throughout this process.

LET'S CUT CRIME TOGETHER

Suzanne was at the Liberal Democrat spring conference where measures to reduce crime, increase conviction rates and cut reoffending were debated and agreed.

The proposals include:

- Scrapping ID Cards and spending the money on front line police-
- Giving councils the powers to close problem pubs and clubs
- Making sentencing more honest and cutting automatic early release
- Compulsory work and training in prison to cut reoffending and better compensate victims of crime



Commenting, Liberal Democrat Shadow Home Secretary, **Nick Clegg MP** said:

"I am delighted that Conference has endorsed this policy paper and adopted a clear strategy for cutting crime.

"The debate on Britain's criminal justice system is now at a turning point. The Government's decade-long record of populism and legislative hyperactivity has made Britain less safe and more anxious.

"This package of measures demonstrates that a liberal approach to crime is not only more principled but also able to deliver greater public safety by reducing levels of repeat crime, restoring honesty to sentencing and providing visible policing on our streets."

In a **question and answer session at the conference** with independent experts, Suzanne asked a question



about how to deal with families who cause problems to neighbours with anti-social behaviour, and should there be ways of addressing this rather than just evict the family to cause more problems for other neighbours. The reply was that "prevention is very much the key" and that problems should be tackled before they get much worse.

Suzanne and Julia have been trying to get Stockton Council to adopt this approach with families for some time now.

SKIPS

The next skips for household waste are
Thursday 22nd March, Norton Drive
Thursday 22nd March, Elm Tree Community Centre
Wednesday 18th April, Marske Lane layby



Neighbourhood Watch

You may be interested in the following websites

www.nwinfo.co.uk and
www.just-stockton.com

The next meeting is on
Wednesday 4th April at
7.00 p.m at
Medina House. All are welcome who are interested in Neighbourhood Watch.



There is no substitute for all year round action and service

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT ACTION -ALL YEAR, EVERY YEAR.