

BISHOPSGARTH PLAY PARK NEWS



This was finally officially opened on 13th September by former Councillor Suzanne Fletcher and local schoolchildren.

As a thank you to Suzanne the Residents Association presented a selection of Spring bulbs which have been planted in the play area and at the junction of **Bothal Walk / Harrowgate Lane**.



Suzanne helping to plant bulbs

Elliot, Julia, and Fiona Hall MEP wish you all a very happy and peaceful
Christmas
and want to say a huge THANK YOU to all the FOCUS deliverers.



A HUFFIN' AND A PUFFIN....

Earlier this year over 160 of you signed Elliot's petition to have the crossing at Elm Tree Avenue upgraded to a Puffin following the loss of the school crossing patrol. The request was considered at a meeting of the Central Area Strategy Group in June and not considered important enough for funding.



We were so upset by this that we went along to the next meeting with Suzanne Fletcher and the Chair and Vice Chair of Bishopsgarth Association of Residents. Let's just say that a healthy debate ensued! **BUT** – nearly all of the money available had been allocated so we managed to obtain £2,000 from the Transport Strategy and together with £13,000 of our ward budget (almost all of our remaining funds) the crossing could go ahead.

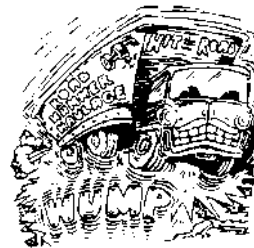
THEN we were told that the total £15,000 estimated to do the work hadn't been properly costed and so £3,000 must be spent on a "study". Naturally we're not happy about this but it seems the study is needed to decide if it's a suitable point.

This should be complete by the end of the year and we'll let you know what is decided.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS - STANDING UP FOR YOU

SAINSBURY'S DELIVERY WAGONS:

We've had further complaints about delivery wagons at Sainsbury's, **Whitehouse Farm**. Loading and unloading is only permitted between 7am – 10pm. Environmental Health Officers have visited the store to request that staff are not carrying out preparatory work in the loading bays before this time. Let us know if there are any further problems.



TRISTAR IMPROVEMENTS:

We are both pleased that everyone we have spoken to is absolutely delighted with the standard of workmanship by Tristar Homes in the replacements of doors, windows etc. There have been a couple of issues about vehicles parking on grass verges or obstructing access to garages but these have hopefully been dealt with.

The next Estate Walkabout is on **Tuesday 10th January** (weather permitting) starting at **10.am at Medina House**. Let us know if there's anything you want us to look at or just watch out for us on the estate.

We have been notified that the Tristar Patch Manager for Elm Tree Estate is John Wakeling who can be contacted on 524582

DISABLED PARKING BAYS:

One of our Liberal Democrat colleagues, Cllr Alan Lewis (Eaglescliffe ward) spoke at the recent council meeting about the problem of non blue badge holders parking in designated disabled parking bays in private car parks such as supermarkets and at Teesside Park. He called for the council to ask for some action. The motion was backed by Elliot Kennedy who said "parking bays for blue badge holders are there to make life easier for those with a disability. Those people who abuse such spaces make life much more difficult for those who genuinely need these spaces. I urge people to park considerately and for the car park owners to take action against those who don't".



SKATEBOARDING:

As we've said before, we continue to try to find a long term solution to the problem of where our young people can safely use their skateboards and bmx's without causing problems for themselves and others.

In the meantime we have arranged for the semi static facility to be set up as an indoor activity for local young people at **Elm Tree Community Centre on Saturday 3rd December from 4 - 6pm**. There will be qualified youth workers in attendance and an opportunity to shape future activities.

Do let interested young people know about this event and encourage them to attend.

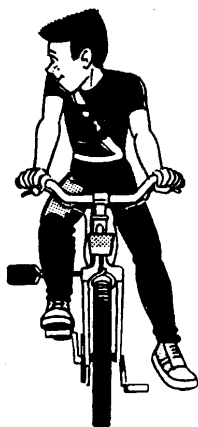


NEW BIKE FOR CHRISTMAS?

It is very worrying how many people – of all ages – are riding bikes at night with no or very little light. Please make sure that all new bikes are well fitted with lights and reflectors, and check on your old bikes too. For a few pounds a tragic accident could be avoided.

Old bicycles can be refurbished and re-used by contacting “The Hub” on Bridge Road, telephone 803441 or

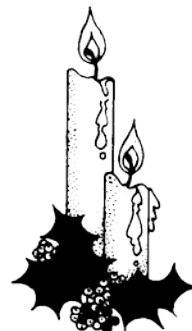
www.stockton.gov.uk/thehub



SEASONAL WARNING

Elliot and Julia wish everyone a very Happy Christmas but please be careful with those Christmas Lights, Candles etc. Do make sure that you have a working smoke alarm and that you know how to escape your property in the event of a fire.

Cleveland Fire Brigade will carry out a **FREE Home Fire Safety Check**, install smoke detectors where needed and can provide lots of other advice. If you haven't had a check carried out then ring **01429 874063** to arrange.



RECYCLING AT CHRISTMAS



Do remember to recycle those extra bottles, cans and cardboard. All Christmas cards, including the glittery ones can be recycled, but not wrapping paper.

CHRISTMAS REFUSE COLLECTIONS

Real Christmas trees will be collected in the week beginning 9th January - just leave out on your normal collection day where you would normally put your wheelie bin / re-cycling. There are no changes to normal collection days.

Julia says thanks to all of you who have enquired after my health following the last Focus. All being well, surgery will take place on 15th December and I'll be out of action for the next few weeks so if you have any urgent enquiries then please contact Councillor Elliot Kennedy. I hope to be fully mobile again by end of January.



MONEY MATTERS

In these times of severe cutbacks there has been some criticism that your local councillors are not taking their share of the “pain”.

So what are the facts?

Stockton councillors' “basic allowance” is £9,300. Those with additional responsibilities like Committee Chairs, Cabinet Members etc, get more (details at <http://tinyurl.com/c9tj2dc>)

Earlier this year Stockton Liberal Democrats called for a review of these allowances but were outvoted by other political parties. We believed that at a time when jobs were being lost, it was only right and proper that we should share in these cuts. Labour disagreed.

Now an independent review is taking place and Julia has spoken to the panel. She said “the basic allowance needs to remain at least as it is now. If councillors are truly to be representative of the people we have to make sure that lack of money doesn't stop people coming forward. Allowances pay for printing of ward newsletters and other expenses. Councillors are classed as employed so we pay tax and national insurance on all of our allowances. This can have a knock on effect on other benefits. Whilst I love the work I do for the residents, I'm afraid that I couldn't afford to do it for love alone”.

Liberal Democrats believe that the amount paid for additional responsibilities should be reduced.

SNIPPETS

another missing street sign at **Welland Crescent** has been reported and replaced.... **Norwood Close** and **Barlborough Avenue** signs awaiting replacement....Discussions continue about the problem of obstructive parking at **Marske Lane / Leam Lane/ Felton Lane**.... Graffiti at **Maplin View** reported for removal....redundant lamp columns at **Medina Close & Lowick Close** reported for removal....damaged BT manhole cover at **Bothal Walk** repaired...dumped newspapers in beck at **Foxwood Drive** reported for removal....graffiti on litter bin at **Sainsbury's car park** reported for cleaning....various faulty street lights reported....re-surfacing works at **Dale Close, Melksham Square, Merlin Road** and **Mosston Road** should all have been carried out by now....vandalised litter bin at **Tollerton Close** reported



WARD SURGERIES

at present we hold two ward surgeries each month, one at Bishopsgarth and one at Elm Tree. Stockton Council pays for the cost of the room hire. (see details of when we are there to right)

We estimate that 98% of our contact with residents is via telephone, letter or e-mail. Only 2% attend ward surgeries. Do you think it is a good use of our time and council money for us to be sitting doing nothing for a couple of hours each month?

Should we continue to hold regular ward surgeries or should we arrange meetings where an issue calls for it?

Please let us know what you think.

CONTACT US BY

Letter - Julia Cherrett, & Elliot Kennedy,
FREEPOST, NEA 765, STOCKTON-ON-TEES, TS16 9BR (no need for a stamp)

Phone - 785473 (Julia) or 618851 (Elliot) **e-mail** -
julia.cherrett@stockton.gov.uk or:
elliot.kennedy@stockton.gov.uk

Or visit us at our **ward surgeries** at
Elm Tree Community Centre

Tuesday 13th December, 17th January, 21st February

6.00 pm to 7.00pm
or **Bishopsgarth School**

6pm to 6.30pm

Before **Bishopsgarth Association of Residents**
meeting at 6.30 p.m - all welcome. Monday 5th
December, 9th January,
6th February

You can also contact your Liberal Democrat Member of
European Parliament, Fiona Hall MEP:

Fiona@fionahallmep.co.uk

www.fionahall.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 383 0119

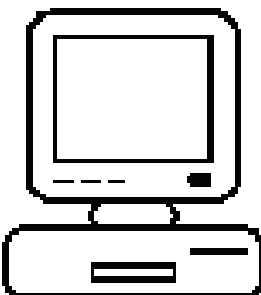


KEEPING IN TOUCH

We also send out an occasional "e-news" to those of you who have signed up to receive e-mail updates. This gives news that comes up in between Focus.

These are sent out "blind" so no-one else can see your e-mail address, and do not have attachments or graphics to fill up your inbox.

If you'd like to sign up to these messages please e-mail one of us giving your name and home address.



And don't forget we can also provide Focus in audio format, free of charge- just let us know if you'd like to receive a copy.

Dog Fouling: we've had several complaints about dog fouling in the vicinity of **Maplin View** near to **Greengates and St Mark's Schools**. We will be asking for more patrols in this area where our young children are walking to school. Please do make sure that you clean up after your dog and if you know who the offenders are, let us know so that action can be taken.

WORKING WITH YOU, WORKING FOR YOU!
FOCUS - THE ORIGINAL AND THE BEST. NOW IN ITS 30th YEAR!