

**FEEDBACK** on some recent stories:

**Tesco trees** - so far nothing has happened so Alan is reminding them.

**Bowling green** - now been accepted as an idea for Preston Park for when funding is available.

**Dunnotar Ave** old railway bridge - ownership issues mean it can't be progressed as a community project

**Urlay Nook Rd railway land** - Egglecliffe & Eaglescliffe council are working on ideas that will improve the appearance while maintaining security for the gardens backing on to it. Your Lib Dem ward councillors will back the project in whatever way we can.

**Elton Lane** - mixed response to closing the entrance from **Butterfield** but positive response to putting a speed bump in place. This is now being looked into.

**Teesside High School** wind turbine application has been withdrawn

**Allen's West** - pre-application consultation raised many issues including the provision of affordable housing, school places, traffic, employment opportunities and leisure opportunities especially for young people over the age of 8. The application has now been submitted and Stockton Council will decide it in the New Year. Alan and Maureen have details if you want to know more. Or go to Stockton Council's planning website: <http://tinyurl.com/dy7blzp> and search for application 11/2842/EIS.

## ALLEN'S WEST CROSSING



Following our campaign Network Rail have agreed to upgrade the crossing barriers to full barriers, though not till 2013. Alan has written to ask for it sooner than that.

Meanwhile they will install a "red man" signal at each side of the crossing where the barrier doesn't reach.

Stockton Council is going to install a staggered barrier on the approach to the crossing so that children can't run full pelt onto it; the gap in the fence has been filled.

For now, please keep an eye on young children & remind older ones of the dangers. A train can't stop in an instant if a child runs out. There have been two recent scares - please don't let your Christmas be spoiled by an accident.

### Making a Difference in Your Area:

Following requests from your Lib Dem councillors we've had

- **Worsley Close** resurfaced (asked for 3 years ago)
- **Burnmoor Drive** area resurfaced
- Street name signs repaired or replaced at **Albert Rd, Aberdovey Drive, St Andrew's Close**
- Block paving in **Larch Cres**, agreed in April, finally installed this summer
- Potholes, damaged grass verges, trip hazards and drains sorted out
- Damaged manhole cover at **Lime Rd/Myrtle Rd** junction repaired

**Don't forget your MEP:** Fiona Hall can be contacted at 55A Old Elvet, Durham, DH1 3HN,

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**LIBERAL  
DEMOCRATS**

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*Fiona Hall MEP joins Alan, Maureen and Lesley in wishing you all a peaceful and happy Christmas and saying a huge Thank You to the volunteers who deliver Focus, no matter what the weather.*

## RELIEF TINGED WITH SADNESS

That's how your Lib Dem councillors feel about the demolition of *The Grange*.

Ever since the new owner sought planning permission to demolish and build new housing we have had problems. The lovely old house was left to go derelict. Vandals damaged it. Children risked life and limb to play there. Neighbours worried constantly. We have tried and tried to get the building made safe. Initially we tried to have it brought back into use as a home until such time as demolition plans were ready to be implemented. All to no avail.

Early in November Alan discovered that young children were playing there and immediately asked Stockton Council staff to insist it was made safe. Alan's pressure meant that just two days later the owner agreed the time had come for demolition and started work a few days later.

The rules around VAT for refurbishment and new building are part of the problem, but there are also problems of owners not caring about the wider environment in an area where they own property.

We have asked government ministers to do something to change the VAT rules which favour new building. But no government can change the attitude of a developer.



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**Or see your Liberal Democrat Councillors at Ward Surgery (no appointment needed):**

Tues. 20 Dec 6 to 7pm, Egglecliffe Parish Hall, Butts Lane  
Fri 6 Jan, 3 Feb 6.30 to 7.30 p.m. Trinity Methodist Church, Witham Ave  
Tues 17 Jan 6.30 to 7.30 p.m. Egglecliffe Community Centre, Durham Lane.

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# SCHOOL PARKING

**Carnoustie Drive** recently gained yellow lines and speed bumps to try to make it safer for children going to *The Links School* on foot.



Your Lib Dem team consulted with residents and parents on whether the scheme has made a difference. We had lots of complaints about the inconsiderate parking on **Carnoustie Drive**, with cars parked so far onto the pavement that prams and wheelchairs can't get past. We asked Stockton Council's Enforcement supervisor to come out with us to see the problem. As a result Enforcement officers will be patrolling regularly over the coming months.

**You can be given a Fixed Penalty Notice (Fine) if you don't leave enough space**

**between your car and the edge of the pavement or if you park within 10m of a junction.**

We know there are problems near other primary schools in the ward and Alan has been working with Stockton Council officers on both Butts Lane and round Junction Farm School.

All of the schools have schemes to help children walk or cycle to school safely. Why not ask about walking buses, park & stride and other schemes?



**Let's make 2012 a year of safety round our schools.**



## DONATE A COAT

Your Lib Dem councillors are supporting the Salvation Army/ITV Breakfast appeal for warm winter coats. A warm winter coat can make a big difference to how well a person copes with the winter. The Salvation Army has teamed up with ITV Breakfast show to appeal for donations which will be used to help poor families, homeless people, elderly people who can't afford to get a warm coat. Alan, Maureen and Lesley are happy to come and collect donations or you can take them yourself to Stockton Salvation Army Citadel, Palmerston St, Stockton.

## SEASONAL SAFETY

Lesley Lewis wants to add a note of caution to Christmas:

Please

- check your Christmas lights before putting them on the tree,
- don't leave the lights on when you're out of the house or in bed
- make sure bikes have lights, reflectors and good brakes

Have a safe and happy Christmas!

## BMX, MICRO-SCOOTER, SKATEBOARD -



some of the ways in which young people choose to enjoy themselves and exercise. Sadly, there's nowhere local to do it without putting themselves or others in danger. Currently the front of **Orchard Shops** is a favourite site.

Since before 2006 Eaglescliffe Lib Dems have tried to get Stockton Council to provide safe facilities. In turn Labour and Conservative led councils talked but did nothing.

This month Stockton Council are again consulting though with no promise of funding ([http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/yarmeagle\\_scliffeskate](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/yarmeagle_scliffeskate))

Meanwhile we are delighted that Egglecliffe and Eaglescliffe Council, which covers the area of the ward from the Tees to Station Rd and the whole of the Orchard, Kingsmead & Hunters' Green estates, is working with the young people to try to achieve something for the area. Well done to the young people and to the Parish councillors who have more vision than Stockton Council seems to have.

## MONEY MATTERS

In these times of severe cuts 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 extra responsibilities like Committee Chairs & Cabinet Members get more (details at <http://tinyurl.com/c9tj2dc>)

In March Stockton Liberal Democrats called for a review of allowances but were outvoted by other political parties. We believed that when jobs were being lost, it was only right that we should share in the cuts. Labour and Conservatives disagreed.

Now an independent review is taking place and Maureen has told the panel: "the basic allowance is needed. If councillors are to be truly representative of the people we have to make sure that lack of money doesn't stop new people coming forward. Some people have to take unpaid time off work to be councillors. Others lose benefits. We are classed as employed so we pay tax & national insurance. We cannot leave the task of representing residents to the handful who are rich enough to be able to do it for free."

**Lib Dem councillors believe that the extra responsibility allowances should be cut. There are too many and some are too high.**

## 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. Put them in with your cardboard.

### CHRISTMAS BINS

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

## WARD SURGERIES

Every month Alan and Maureen hold two fixed surgeries in hired rooms, open to any resident to discuss concerns. The tradition dates back decades. We also hold street surgeries not needing a room. We estimate that over 98% of our contact with residents comes by phone, email or personally where you live, work or shop. Stockton Council is looking for ways to save

money and is asking councillors to consider the best ways of meeting residents' needs.

Over the next month or two we'll be considering our ward surgeries - should we continue as now or stop the fixed ones, calling a public meeting if there is something important to consult on? We'll be interested to hear your views.

**Liberal Democrats - Up Your Street, Working with You and for You, All Year, Every Year**