

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Personal cases being dealt with by your Councillors:

We obviously cannot disclose details of the actual cases, but the summary below lets you know the range of topics we can help with.

- Working with the North Riverside Residents association on an Eco Brick project.
- getting a housing association out to agree to a new kitchen.
- Helping resident fight against a planning issue.
- Support for individuals on ASB, flytipping, and dealing with a landlord.
- Parking issues around the schools.
- Working with the council on a programme to clear up back lanes.
- Wheeled bin problems around the ward.
- Bus services not meeting residents needs.
- Trees and the problems they cause for many residents.

## North Riverside Resident Association (NRRA)

The North Riverside residents managed to get a committee together to keep the Association going. The open meetings have been suspended for the time being but some activities like litter picks will continue. 1pm on the Thursday after recycling is collected.

## Police and Communities Together (PACT) Meetings

Will not be taking place for the foreseeable future but councillors will get pact priorities from the police for future editions.

As we don't have much space we can say crime figures either went down slightly or stayed the same across the categories. They did say that there is two gangs of young people causing problems across the north end of town. If you see them doing anything wrong please don't approach them but ring the police. The police have identified some so hopefully the mischief will stop shortly.

## Meet your Councillors

Twice a month your councillors would normally hold a ward surgery at different times and in different parts of the ward. Residents are invited to come along to discuss problems or ask for advice, in complete confidence. We would normally meet on Wednesdays.

**All ward surgeries have been cancelled for the time being.**

Please feel free to contact any of us on any issue.

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Cllr Hilary Allen [hilary.allen@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:hilary.allen@darlington.gov.uk) or 01325 480277  
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# FOCUS



## NORTH ROAD WARD

Edited by your Lib Dem FOCUS Team

Cllr Anne-Marie Curry

Cllr Hilary Allen

Cllr Nigel Boddy



Hilary with highway officers discussing access and crossings

Very early after the elections we invited officers from Highways and Street Scene to see our problems for themselves. We were pleased they spent several hours being walked round and were left in doubt as to what we would hope to see in the future! We will, of course, keep you all posted as we go along.

Head of Street Scene advised of a new Council initiative, together with the Enforcement Team, to try and tackle the situation in the back lanes. We have 4 local streets in the first tranche of this new initiative, Ruby / Dublin / China / Peabody. The second tranche has started around Westmoreland and Eldon Streets, We will, of course, be pressing for this to continue across all the problem areas for flytipping and untidy back lanes in the ward.

We also spoke with him about tree issues in North Rise / Cumberland / the cemetery etc. A couple of these got dealt with very quickly. However, we are aware there are still issues in those areas and we will keep monitoring and will pitch for work to be done as often as we can.

Head of Highways was tackled re issues on trying to get onto North Road from our side streets; together with traffic light issues that some of our pedestrians are experiencing.



## Reclaiming a bus stop

Residents on North Rd had pointed out that several times buses had passed them by because they could not be seen, due to a beautiful (but rather out of control) tree. We went along and lopped as much off as we could reach and a nearby resident kindly offered to take all our bags of cuttings to the tip. The result of just one hour's work (four LibDems) made all the difference. We then approached the correct department and asked that this tree be put on a regular pruning schedule.

Reclaiming the view for the bus stop



## Reclaiming pavements

This was an achievement that took several hours, as it was just two of us – but a kindly neighbourhood resident supplied us with cool drinks, which were very welcome. However, we are happy to come and take our aggression out on this wayward foliage and reclaim the pavement for our residents.

Before and after the 2 day cutting.



**Liberal Democrats: Working for you All Year Round**

## Coronavirus / Covid19

As this virus takes grip across the country we can be grateful so far the cases in Darlington have stayed steady at 2 reported cases but just increased to 3. Keep up the good work and try and stay safe. The situation on instructions are changing on a daily bases and we as councillors can give you information which is correct and verified by the Government, the NHS or the Council.

Cllr Curry is getting a weekly briefing on a Tuesday and will share what is possible with any resident who would like to know what is going on in Darlington.

To find anything out there will be several options, one is there will be a post on social media, or you can receive an email or text message and the last way will be a phone Call.

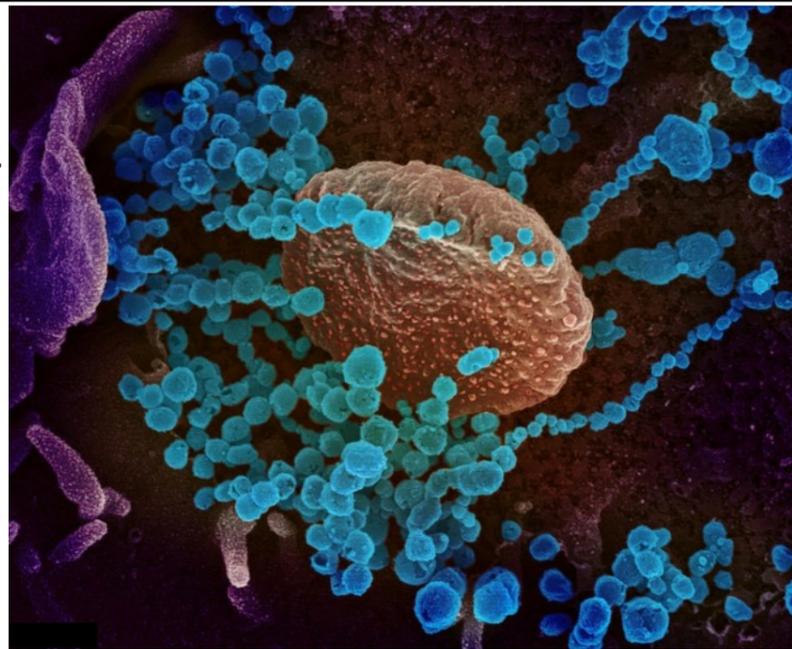
If you want to find out on social media we will be using Facebook and twitter. On Facebook updates will be posted on North Road Ward, Darlington and on Darlington and Sedgfield Liberal Democtrats. For Twitter you will need to follow Anne-Marie on [@curryannemarie](#).

If you wish to receive an email please email us and we will ensure you get a regular email update. At any point you want to stop getting the emails you can reply STOP and we will delete your email address. We will not share your email address outside of council group while we are using it to contact you about this virus.

If you want a text message then as above you will need to send us your phone number. As with the email address you can opt out at any point and we will keep your number between the three of us during this virus outbreak

If you want a phone call then please let us have your phone number so we can contact you.

If you don't want to know anything more about the this we will respect that and not put it in any leaflets after this one



### Coronavirus support for vulnerable Darlington

There is a support group that has been set up in Darlington which is called Coronavirus support for vulnerable Darlington. Search for it on Facebook, if you are not on Facebook contact Anne-Marie as she is one of the leads for the North Road ward. There should be leaflet coming out soon, but the aim is to help vulnerable, or elderly that have to self isolate. There is already over 50 residents from the ward who have signed up to help, by having a chat on the phone, picking up prescriptions, doing a bit of shopping or sharing ideas on how to keep the children entertained. If you want to volunteer go onto the Facebook page and ask where you can help. If you are not on Facebook but want to help let Anne-Marie know and she will share your info with the other lead. Your info will go no further than that. This is an evolving group so anyone with any skills they want to offer please get involved. If you want to help outside the ward that is also very welcome.

## Hilary Allen



Many of you who know me from before I was elected as one of your LibDem Councillors, will know how vocal I was in my criticism of both the Council and Councillors. I now, humbly (!), have to retract *some*, but not all of those criticisms.

The Council Officers have produced a (in my opinion) fantastic "guide" to who does what in the Council, and have carried out some excellent training on a whole range of topics.

Please see below for my particular itinerary since being elected :-

**May 7<sup>th</sup>** = Carousel (opportunity to meet all Heads of Departments), plus get official photo taken! 13<sup>th</sup> – Corporate Induction. 15<sup>th</sup> – Code of Conduct (learning what is and isn't acceptable behaviour!). 22<sup>nd</sup> – the Planning system.

**June 3** – Responsibilities re Licensing. 13<sup>th</sup> – Scrutiny questioning skills. 17<sup>th</sup> (all day) – Safeguarding Children in the morning, then Safeguarding Adults in the afternoon. 24<sup>th</sup> – For first-time Councillors; to help us get to grips with everything that will be required of us. 25<sup>th</sup> – learning about the Council's decision-making process.

**July 8** – Corporate Parenting (every Councillor is responsible for all the children of Darlington!). 19<sup>th</sup> – Emergency Preparedness Training

**Aug 1** – we met with Cllr Paul Howell (who is now MP for Sedgfield) as he at that time had the portfolio for Green Spaces/Parks etc – we identified several issues within North Park – all of which he was keen to see rectified. Unfortunately the Conservatives do not currently have anyone specifically in that role; so we are just having to await their new recruit into that position.

**Sep 9** – pre-application briefing on Sadberge site. 23<sup>rd</sup> – briefing re Climate Change. 30<sup>th</sup> – Citizenship Ceremony.

**Oct 17** – training re Economy & Resources Scrutiny Committee. 23<sup>rd</sup> – briefing re Dementia, plus a tour of Feethams House (a Council owned building). 31<sup>st</sup> – briefing on the Draft Local Plan.

**Nov 10** – saw me attend my first Remembrance Day Parade. I was very moved and very proud to be part of this Civic Service. 18<sup>th</sup> – pre-application briefing re Faverdale site.

25<sup>th</sup> – briefing re Climate Change.

**Dec 16** – briefing on the Rail Heritage Project. Citizenship Ceremony. A third briefing on Climate Change.

I have also been taken on a one-to-one tour of the new Council owned houses/flats up on Allington Way (unfortunately I could not attend the official councillor tour but they graciously offered me an individual inspection).

The training has been very comprehensive in (a) advising what is expected of us (b) what our responsibilities are and (c) how, on our various committees, we should leave our national politics at the door and work together solely for the benefit of ALL residents.

There is so much more to tell you but Hilary has run out of space so updates will be made in future Focus editions.