



Blakelaw and North Fenham Community Council

Annual Report 2020/2021

Introduction

This Annual Report is prepared by Community Councillor John Wears, Chairperson, Blakelaw and North Fenham Community Council. The Annual Report is intended to provide information on the work of the Council during the past year and the plans for the coming year.

All meetings of the Community Council including sub committees have been held by Zoom since April 2020. Following Government instruction and NALC advice the planned AGM meeting via zoom on Thursday 13th May was rearranged to a face-to-face meeting on Thursday 20th May 2021 at 18.00 to be held in the Church Hall, English Martyrs Church, North Fenham. This is the first face to face meeting since the Coronavirus pandemic and all covid safe precautions have been put in place for the meeting to go ahead.

It has been such a challenging year for us all and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Blakelaw and North Fenham Community Council team for your ongoing commitment to support to our local community.

We have all had enormous pressures over the past year, having to adapt to new ways of working to carry on serving the community the best we can. The day to day running the Council of the Community Council is totally dependent on our Council Clerk, Helen Richardson. I would like thank Helen for the support I have received as chair throughout these challenging times.

As we see increased pressures on local community services with less resources and less funding, the Community Council is committed to do all we can to reduce the impact on local residents. In 2021/22 we are committed to improve local cross agency working and cohesion to address issues and challenges we are facing.



Community Councillors			Helen Richardson, Community Council Clerk Email: bnfcc@outlook.com
2021			
BLAKELAW WARD	BLAKELAW WARD	NORTH FENHAM WARD	CRAGSTON WARD
Cllr John Wears – Chair Email: johnwears.bnfcc@gmail.com 50 Binswood Avenue Blakelaw Newcastle upon Tyne, NE5 3PP Mobile: 07716 623 862	Cllr Ann Keenan 59 Southmead Avenue Blakelaw Newcastle upon Tyne NE5 3PA Phone: 0191 271 6547 Mobile: 07546 714 150	Cllr Juna Sathian Email junasathian.bnfcc@gmail.com Mobile: 07498226464	Cllr Irene Teasdale Email: irenesbuffetts@hotmail.com
Cllr Lorraine Birkett Email: larial_birkett@hotmail.co.uk Mobile: 07545 162 320	Cllr Violet Rooke 5 Wallington Close Kingston Park Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2YZ Email: violetRooke@btinternet.com	Cllr Lee Stott Email: lee.stottbnfcc@gmail.com	Marilyn Irving 2 Abercrombie Place Blakelaw Newcastle, NE5 3TB Email: marilynirving@hotmail.com
Cllr James Gill – Vice Chair Email: jimmygill.bnfcc@gmail.com 58 Binswood Avenue Blakelaw Newcastle upon Tyne, NE5 3PP Mobile: 07986 131 306	Vacancy	Vacancy	Vacancy

During the last year - Cllr Ron Clarke and Cllr Karen Ferry resigned. I would like to thank them both for all their hard work and dedication over the years. I would especially like to thank Ron Clarke who served on the Community Council for many years and for the last 3 years as Vice Chairperson. I also want to thank Cllr James Gill for standing in as acting Vice Chairperson for the past 3 months. Councillor vacancies were advertised and we welcomed Juna Sathian and Lee Stott who were co-opted onto the Council in January 2021 - welcome to the team.

Covid 19 Pandemic

The impact of Covid 19 has had such a devastating impact on our lives and the wider community and country. The pandemic and lockdowns have brought us all unknown challenges and sadness. With now just under 3.5 million deaths world-wide we all know the pandemic is not over yet. As we see the rollout of the vaccination programme and now the easing of the national restriction. We are starting to see some progress and are now hopefully heading in the right direction and back to life as we knew it before.

One positive out of all this sadness that I am sure we all can agree is that our sense of community is stronger. It's been great to see people coming forward to help others and offer support to those in need.

Many of us have not been able to have a physical presence in the community due to the pandemic restrictions and local/national lockdowns. However, the Community Council has

been here for local resident in a number of other ways and we have led the way in supporting the community, we have:

Support individuals in need on a one-to-one basis (telephone, emails and provided general support)	Dropped of food parcels/delivering shopping	Send out regular covid 19 specific newsletters	Developed a dedicated page on our web for covid 19 updates
Children key worker thank you card competition with prizes for all entries	Signposted residents to local services	Regularly updated our social media platforms	Raised residents' complaints with relevant agencies
Sent out leaflets offering our support and included useful contact info.	Sent thank you card to our Key Workers and local supermarkets	Developed and sent advice posters to all local business to display and promote	Made a financial donation to the local food bank
Donated to the Christmas hamper appeal	Donated Christmas trees and gifts to both Hilton and Thomas Walling Primary Schools	Held a number of free Easter competitions	Free Christmas raffle with prizes for adults, children and families
Our trained mental health fist aiders have been available to offer support	Free wellbeing courses offered to all residents	Funded Youth provisions to support engagement	Led on tackling the increase of anti-social behaviour

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Key Workers, NHS staff and everyone in the community who have volunteered to support us throughout the pandemic. I do hope that our NHS staff and all key workers get the recognise and pay increase I am sure you will agree they deserve.

Our Commitment to Tackle Anti-Social behaviour

Over the past twelve months the Council has seen a massive increase of anti-social behaviour across the whole area of Blakelaw and North Fenham. We receive a number of complaints from residents on a weekly basis and in the six-week period over the months of January and February we received a staggering 73 complaints most of which were regarding anti-social behaviour. We have worked closely with the local Police team and more recently attended a local SAPS meeting to tackle this ongoing issue. We will continue to encourage residents to report incidents of anti-social behaviour. We do this by sharing articles in our newsletter and on our social media sites.

The Community Council have followed up on: -

- Bus Service disruption following youths throwing bricks at bus windows and what will be put in place to prevent this again
- Issues with Blakelaw Park including fires, litter, drug related incidents
- Off road motorbike driving at speed on the footpaths around the estate.
- Fly-tipping and drug use/dealing in north Fenham
- Drug dealing in Blakelaw
- Anti-social behaviour at the shopping centre and around the tower blocks

We are in regular communication with Northumbria Police and will continue to do all that we can to make Blakelaw and North Fenham a nicer and safer place to live.

Sub Committees

Community Engagement and Communication: the group heads up all of the Council's communications including the Council's website, social media platforms, newsletters, publications and events. The committee has been responsible for keeping residents regularly updated regarding the pandemic via specific newsletter, leaflets, key worker thank you cards and posters for local business.

Environment Group: this year the group has been limited in what activity we could be involved with due to the restriction in place because of the pandemic. Councillors have been part of the consultation with the City Council regarding the new sports and leisure hub that will be built on Blakelaw Park. As of the 19th May we are still waiting for a detailed update from the City Council despite requesting for an update on a number of occasions. We have also engaged and promoted the importance of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood project.

Employment Group: The group has met via zoom during the pandemic. Weekly one to one digital meetings/telephone call with the chair and the clerk have been in place throughout the pandemic. The Chair proposes that the title of the 'employment committee' is renamed to 'staffing committee'

Funding Local Community Activities:

Throughout the Pandemic the Community Council have funded food banks, made a large food donation to a Christmas hamper appeal and also support detached youth work provided by Projects4change who have worked tirelessly around the pandemic to deliver support to our hard-to-reach youths. The Community Council also supported the work of Blakelaw Club Juniors Football Club with FA and pitch fees.

Planning Applications

Throughout the year, the Council receives planning applications for consultation. The Community Council is committed to avoiding inappropriate developments and is asked by the City Council Planning Committee to express its views on each application and also any comments passed to it by the residents. This we do in an advisory capacity only, as the final decision in each case rests with the relevant Planning Authority.

Finance Report

To be tabled at the Annual General Meeting

The Community Council like everyone, have faced a number of challenges this year. My promise is that we will continue to do everything within our power to support our local community over the coming months, hopefully we will all be able to get together soon. This year has been like no other. I have been proud to be able to serve our local community as chair of the Community Council through these difficult times.

Cllr John Wears (chair)
Blakelaw and North Fenham Community Council