

# Life in Ashington

APRIL 2017



## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

**Although we are well into 2017, the early month's are always a good time to both reflect on the year we left behind and to also look forward and plan for the challenges that lie ahead.**

There was certainly much Ashington activity and news in 2016 with the completion of the re-vamp of Station Road and the commencement of other regeneration work in the North East Quarter, the 'Portland Park' area. This work is ongoing and I look forward to further positive outcomes for the town; all in all it adds up to a key moment in the town's development and certainly in relation to the town centre.

As is the Town Council practice now, this is a general 'Life in Ashington' themed newsletter that tries to give residents a quick update on what's happening across a wide-range of subject areas in the town. We also regularly invite Northumbria Police and Ashington Town Team to provide update on work and initiatives in an attempt to cover as many areas of interest as possible in the newsletter. While we can never expect to be able to answer every 'what's happening where' and 'I've heard that' type of question, I genuinely hope that you will continue to find the format both user-friendly and informative.

You will also see throughout this newsletter references to Ashington's 150th Anniversary (1867–2017) under the heading and logo of 'Proud Past, Bright Future' and plans for events and other celebration activities. Many residents are rightly proud of Ashington's past and rich history. Recent times have seen the development of interactive and popular social media and Facebook pages such as 'Ashington Remembered' where residents, past and present, can recall such times and occasionally, lament the passing of fondly remembered days. Change is however also inevitable and as a positive person and advocate for the town I believe that we all have a role to play in working for a bright future.

During my time as Mayor and as Chair of the Town Council, we have continued to work with other partners to try to deliver environmental and other enhancements in the town and actively seek to source external funding wherever possible. The Town Council has invested in its own assets with a major programme of new bin replacements and requests for bus shelters but like

others in the town we also get continually frustrated by ongoing litter problems. We'll continue to work hard to address these issues and work with schools and others to deliver initiatives to help promote litter awareness.

Since becoming Mayor I have had the honour, privilege and pleasure of formally representing the Town and also meeting many of you at community and social events. I've also been invited into our schools where we have some truly outstanding young children and talent emerging across all ages. I had the particular pleasure of recently attending the Wansbeck Music Festival to listen to some of the exceptional young musicians and singers and very much enjoyed the Ashington successes. I was also greatly impressed and moved by the celebration of 'Inspirational Ashington Women' event that took place in the Town Centre in March. It was a glorious day all round with terrific weather and some truly inspiring women being rightly recognised.

Through attending events in the town I have met many unsung heroes and I remain convinced that we have lots of community-spirited, enthusiastic, hard-working and talented individuals and groups who want to create a bright future and help make the town a better place to live and work for the benefit of all.

I genuinely hope that 2017 proves to be a rewarding one for you all individually and that it represents another step forward in seeing improvement in our town.

*Avril Chisholm - Mayor of Ashington*

## 'STOP PRESS'

**Delighted to be able to announce that Lindisfarne will be playing live as part of Northumberland Miners' Picnic on Saturday 10 June 2017 at Woodhorn Museum.**



You can keep up to date with all things Ashington by regularly visiting Ashington Town Council's website [www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk) where you can find news articles, a what's on section as well as information on the work of the Town Council including all of the latest meetings.

# STATION ROAD REGENERATION SCHEME

THE £1.5M STATION ROAD REGENERATION SCHEME WAS COMPLETED IN TIME FOR THE BUSY CHRISTMAS PERIOD.

The pedestrianisation of Station Road dated from the early 1990s and was introduced in an effort to help stimulate local trade but it became clear from stakeholder feedback that the time was right to re-evaluate the street and its use.

Work on the Scheme commenced in May 2016 with the aim to boost local trade, improve the look of the street and deliver wider economic benefits as part of the ongoing regeneration of the town centre.

Station Road is now open to traffic, one-way westbound with 30 on-street parking bays including six disabled spaces. As part of the project the Jackie Milburn statue has been recently relocated to a prominent location outside of Ashington Leisure Centre on the A197.

Following the project, footfall into the town centre has increased and there's a real sense of busyness again. The Ashington Tuesday Market has also moved back onto Station



Road with new stalls and also a number of new traders. The market is open every week from 9.00am till 4.00pm.

As part of Ashington's 150th Anniversary Celebrations the Town Team has also organised a range of monthly Saturday markets to be held on last Saturday of each month during 2017. Full details are provided on page 3 of this Newsletter.

## AMENITY IMPROVEMENTS .....ALLOTMENTS, BUS SHELTERS & LITTER BINS

AN ONGOING PROGRAMME OF IMPROVEMENT WORK TO THE TOWN'S ALLOTMENT SITES AND BUS SHELTERS IS ON-GOING WITH MORE WORK PLANNED TO TAKE PLACE IN COMING MONTHS.

Ashington Town Council has the statutory duty to provide allotments in the town, which it meets through a range of agreements with local Allotment Associations. Many Ashington residents enjoy the benefits of allotment gardening with over 850 plots in the town, one of the largest supplies in the north of England. Working with the Allotment Associations a wide-range of investment work has taken place over the past four years including improvements to paths, water supplies and roadways, security fencing and the development of wildlife areas within the sites. Pleased to report that, in addition to Town Council investment, much of the work has been undertaken with external funding contributions and contributions from the Allotment Association funds.



The Town Council also has responsibility for the provision and maintenance of bus shelters. During 2016 new shelters were installed in the west of Ashington adjacent to Bothal Cottages and Bothal Terrace further to requests from residents.

A further two shelters will replace ageing shelters in North Seaton in the near future.



Additionally, a £30,000 project to upgrade the town's litter bins is well underway. The project is seeing the installation of large ground-mounted litter bins throughout the town to seek to directly address the persistent litter problem. Litter remains a continuing

challenge to local council's and a constant issue of concern for residents, many of whom take the time to report and highlight their concerns.

You will read elsewhere within this newsletter of a new sweeper purchased to both tackle and raise awareness of litter problems in the town. It's often easy and convenient to criticise those who have the task of clearing up, sometimes though it's worth thinking exactly where litter is coming from. Sadly there remains a minority who continue to drop litter without due regard, care or thought for the impact and impression that creates.

Hopefully the new bins, poster campaign and initiatives might start to see the change in attitude and a step in the right direction to tackling the problem.



# ASHINGTON'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY



You may have seen recently a number of posters, flyers and social media postings displaying the Ashington 150 Years 'Proud Past Bright Future' logo, celebrating 1867-2017. You may also be asking, how can we be so sure?

Local historians, who first approached the Town Council with the information, confirmed that 1867 represented the key date in Ashington's history with the sinking of the Bothal Mine Shaft after which the population of the town expanded rapidly. Research uncovered the following quote from the 1962 Ashington Coal Company Handbook:

***"The activities of the present Ashington Coal Company date from when the first shaft 'The Bothal' was sunk. Since this date the development has been rapid and continuous.... Ashington Colliery proper started in 1867 with the sinking of the Bothal Shaft.....from this small beginning was to grow one of the biggest mines in the word."***

To celebrate the 150th anniversary Ashington Town Council is working with Ashington Town Team and a range of other community partners to try to make 2017 a special year for the town.

A first Ashington Calendar, that proved hugely popular, was produced for 2017 and a range of celebrations, outdoor events, exhibitions, public art, musical performances and community clean-up's have already taken place with more to follow.

Some of the events, past present and future, are included here but please keep an eye on the Town Council website for more details.

For those residents who use social media Ashington Town Team has also set up a Facebook group – "Ashington's 150 Celebrations" ..... we know that many of you have already taken the time to comment and express views on what you think of the Proud Past and what you hope for the Bright Future, the views, especially the positive and optimistic ones, are always welcomed.

If you are part of a Community Group and have organised or are looking to arrange a special event to mark the anniversary please let us know.

## ASHINGTON MONTHLY MARKET

Ashington's Themed Monthly Markets 2017	
25 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>Mothers Day Market</b> Treat your Mum to something special, buy a gift from one of the many stalls
29 <sup>th</sup> April	<b>Youth Market</b> Schools, Youth Groups, Colleges and Young People will be selling their wares and providing entertainment
27 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>Northumberland Day</b> Join us at Ashington's Memorial Park at 10am to fly the Northumberland Flag and to celebrate the inaugural Northumberland Day
24 <sup>th</sup> June	<b>Best of British</b> Traditional British produce right on your doorstep
29 <sup>th</sup> July	<b>Summer Market</b> Enjoy the sunshine and visit Ashington summer market
26 <sup>th</sup> August	<b>Food Festival</b> A jam packed day of entertainment and food stalls including the inaugural 'Ashington Show' by Women's Institute - so get your competition entries in.
30 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>Harvest Festival</b> See what treats this new season brings. Collection for Wansbeck Food Bank
28 <sup>th</sup> October	<b>Halloween Market</b>
25 <sup>th</sup> November	<b>Small Business Saturday</b> Support small businesses and independent traders
16 <sup>th</sup> December	<b>Christmas Market</b> Pick up some Christmas food and gifts.

For more information see our website  
[www.ashingtontownteam.co.uk](http://www.ashingtontownteam.co.uk)  
 Twitter: @AshingtonTown Facebook: AshingtonTownTeam

## 150 'ANNIVERSARY' TREES PLANTED IN ASHINGTON

FRIENDS OF ASHINGTON COMMUNITY WOODS (FOACW'S) HAVE RECENTLY PLANTED 150 TREES IN ASHINGTON COMMUNITY WOODLAND AS PART OF THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS FOR THE TOWN.



Mixes of native oak, sycamore and ash trees were planted in March to complement the existing woodland. A mix of spring flowering bulbs were also planted earlier this year by Ashington's Brownie and Guide groups. The planting was financially supported by the Town Council.

Ashington Community Woodland, if you haven't taken the chance to visit and walk around, is a fantastic green space covering over 130 hectares and includes part of the former Ashington Colliery site. FOACW's work as volunteers to improve the woodland as well as organise events to encourage more people to use the space.

The group meet at 10:00am every Monday to carry out work and always welcome anyone to come along whatever their woodlands skills or ability. Why not turn up at the first 'Wildflowers in the Woods Walk' on Thursday 27 May at 7.00pm.

For more information on the group visit [www.ashingtonwoods.org.uk](http://www.ashingtonwoods.org.uk) or you can find them on Facebook.

## CELEBRATING ASHINGTON WOMEN

ASHINGTON TOWN TEAM ORGANISED AND HELD AN EVENT ON SATURDAY 25 MARCH THAT SET OUT TO CELEBRATE THE ROLE OF INSPIRATIONAL ASHINGTON WOMEN.



The event was held on Station Road, as part of the 150th Anniversary Celebrations and was directly supported by the Big Lottery Celebration Fund.

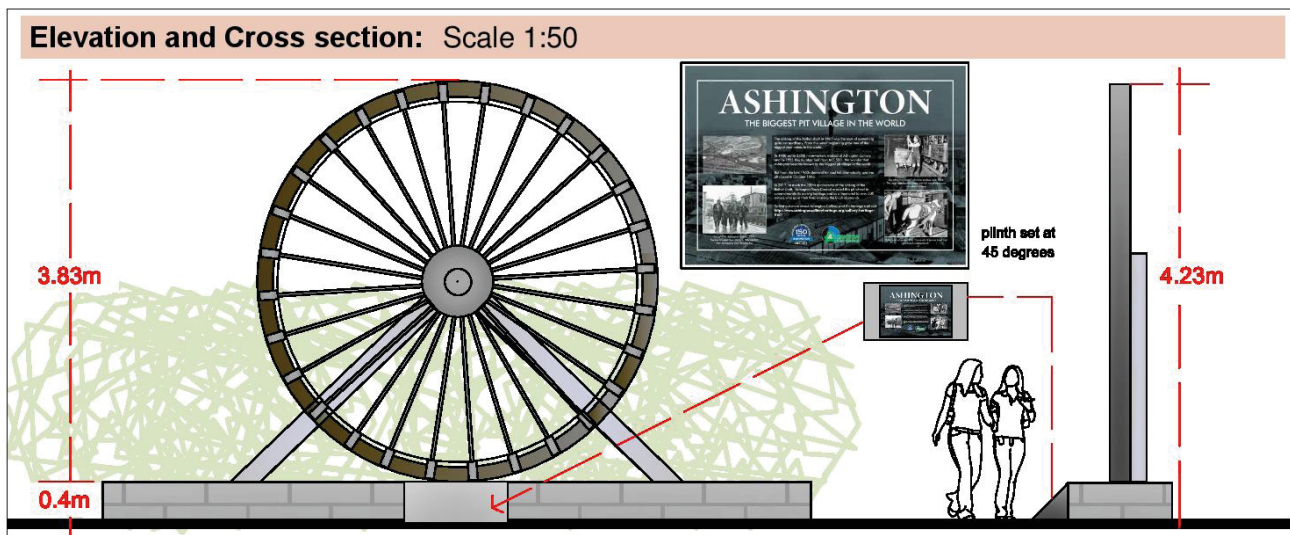
As you all know, there have been and are many inspirational women who have and continue to shape the town of Ashington. A digital and photography exhibition of nominated

women was held, as well as musical performances at the Saturday Monthly Market. The Town Team received over 90 nominations of inspirational women, who all received a certificate and flowers at a prize-giving ceremony as part of the event.

The day started with musical entertainment from the Doo Wop Dollies, Ami Vaziri and the Youth Harmony Choir. The weather was glorious and people crowded on Station Road to see the presentation and to browse around the quality market, enjoy the funfair rides and also get their children's faces painted.

The digital & photography exhibition, held on Wansbeck Square, included recorded interviews with Cissie Charlton, mother of Jack and Bobby, and Bothal Primary school children. The amazing, rich and varied stories of the nominated women were also displayed.

## A PROUD NEW ENTRANCE FEATURE FOR ASHINGTON...



On request, Ashington Town Council is planning a new entrance feature that will celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the town and in particular the Proud Past.

The Ashington Mining Wheel Entrance Feature will see, subject to planning approval and permission, the installation of a fully restored mining wheel standing over 4m tall. The project to be completed in 2017 will also include shrub, bulb and tree planting, up-lighting and an information board detailing the development of the town from the first sinking of the Bothal Mine Shaft in 1867.

As residents will know the town was in the past referred to as the largest pit village in the world. This project is designed to both commemorate the rich mining heritage of the town and also as a memorial to over 300 Ashington miners who gave their lives in 'winning the black diamonds'.

The identified site is close to the entrance of the former Ashington Colliery on Rotary Parkway, the main west to east route through the town. The site is also close to the Miner's Chapel located in the Holy Sepulchre Church and the recently developed Ashington Colliery Heritage Trail which records the rich history of coal mining in the town.

# HIRST PARK REVIVAL PROJECT

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL, ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL, ACTIVE NORTHUMBERLAND AND OTHER PARTNERS HAVE COMPLETED THE DEVELOPMENT PHASE OF THE PROJECT THAT AIMS TO SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE HIRST PARK (THE FLOWER PARK).**

In 2016, stage one development funding was awarded to the project from the Parks for People grants programme, managed by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund. The funding was specifically to enable development of a second stage application to the programme.



In developing the application there were many tasks to complete, such as environmental and structural surveys, historic research, developing detailed designs and plans for future use as well as consultation with residents.

The second stage application has now been formally submitted and if successful, will see £2.27m awarded to the project. Financial contributions from the Town and County Council and the Ashington Leisure Partnership will bring the total project value to £2.7m which will be invested over the next five years. If the bid is successful, as we're hoping it will be, work will commence in early 2018.

The project will ensure the Flower Park is rejuvenated and landscaped with greenhouses and buildings restored. This will provide improved public spaces and new training facilities for the community, to be operated in partnership with Northumberland College.

The one hundred-year old park is renowned as being the place where international football legends the Charlton brothers and Jackie Milburn played as youngsters and the funding will also establish an annual Charlton and Milburn Cup tournament so that local youth groups can hopefully follow in their footsteps.

Many residents will remember the 50th World Cup Celebration Event (pictured), held in the Park last July,

which proved very popular and was extremely well-attended and supported. It is envisaged similar events will be held in the Park in coming years.

The funding will allow play facilities to be enhanced with water play features reintroduced, and the colourful floral displays that the park is so fondly remembered for will also be revived. The coal mining heritage of the park and local area will play a big part in the long term project with events, activities and interpretation resources being developed to explore and tell its story. The project also plans to deliver:

- The re-creation of the "lost garden of Hirst" and links between the recreation ground and Flower Park will be opened up.
- Horticultural training including courses to help families grow their own vegetables.
- Research activities and events to engage local people to help us discover more about the heritage of the park, people and the area.
- A play zone, including a water play feature and wildlife areas.
- The former site of the Woodhorn mining monument will be developed into a community performance and interpretation space, telling the mining heritage story of the area.

We're keeping our fingers crossed for a successful funding outcome and will find out in late June 2017.....keep you posted.





**NORTHUMBRIA POLICE INTRODUCES SUE FRYER, ASHINGTON'S RECENTLY APPOINTED NEIGHBOURHOOD INSPECTOR.**

In her new role the Inspector highlights a revised operating model focussing on the 'Four Pillars of Neighbourhood Policing' with clear objectives guiding local officers as they strive to deliver a first class policing service for residents of our town.

**Safeguarding**

Your neighbourhood policing team are part of a process which works towards ensuring vulnerable people are identified and assisted at the earliest possible stage. Protecting vulnerable people is priority and the relationships we have with our local communities are vital to identifying who need our help.

**Targeted Crime Prevention**

Officers can offer advice and support to local communities to prevent them from falling victims to crime. The local neighbourhood team can provide security advice or assist in setting up community watch programmes. Ashington has seen a reduction in house burglaries, however, residents can reduce the risk by securing vehicles, locking windows and doors and keeping valuables out of sight. Please continue to report any suspicious activity and pass on information you have about those committing offences – we need your help and information to ensure local criminals face the consequences of their actions.

**Collaborative Problem Solving**

Ashington's Neighbourhood policing Team work closely with partners to ensure residents receive the best possible service. We adopt a multi-agency approach in tackling the issues and work in partnership with both local authorities as well as the private and voluntary sectors.

**Engagement**

We engage with our local communities to maintain public confidence in the Police. If there are issues impacting on your well being we want to know about them. Officers continue to act on information and those that persist in criminal behaviour are targeted.

Please call 101 to report non urgent incidents and in an emergency always call 999. Alternatively you can contact the local Neighbourhood Policing Team via email at: [ashington.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk](mailto:ashington.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk), or call Crimestoppers on: 0800 555 111.

**Sue Fryer - Ashington Neighbourhood Inspector**

**MECHANICAL SWEEPER JOINS THE TEAM**

**A NEW MECHANICAL STREET SWEEPER IS NOW OUT IN FORCE IN ASHINGTON WITH THE JOB ROLE OF KEEPING THE TOWN CENTRE CLEAN AND TIDY.**



The pedestrian sweeper has been bought specifically for use in Ashington to help keep Station Road litter free.

The machine is flexible enough to safely access pavements and manoeuvre between parked cars and includes a high-speed powerful brushing system which will remove everything from cigarette butts and cans, to bottles, weeds and leaves. It even has a poop scoop function to pick up dog mess and spray clean the pavement afterwards!

The green machine is the latest addition to the street cleaning fleet and was added after specific requests from the Town Council to look to proper dedicated resources to maintain the new street pedestrian layout and highway.

Paul Jones, the County Council's Director of Local Services and Housing Delivery said *'The Council has invested £1.5m to redevelop Station Road in Ashington, as part of its plans to enhance the town centre environment and boost the local economy. This new Green Machine will ensure that we do our best to keep the town centre clean and tidy and looking its very best for many years to come.'*

*'We have also been asking local people to do their bit by disposing of their waste responsibly - and we are doing ours by upgrading our service and investing in equipment that will help us do the best possible job when it comes to cleaning pavements and public spaces.'*



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