

## **AGENDA 7, Enc ii) OFFICER UPDATE**

### **Update on Tree Management in Ashington, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024**

Following concerns raised by residents and Cllrs regarding tree removals in various areas of Ashington, the Town Council officers took swift action to gather information from Northumberland County Council (NCC) and Bernicia. The report and linked press release outlines the findings and actions taken by both organisations in response to inquiries.

Ashington Town Council engaged NCC and Bernicia to clarify the reasons behind recent tree removals. Both organisations reassured that no healthy trees are felled unless absolutely necessary. The following details were confirmed:

**NCC Tree Management:** Two trees were felled in Hirst Park – a dead Beech and a diseased Cherry, both leaving habitat stems for local biodiversity. A replacement tree for the Cherry will be planted in the Autumn/Winter.

**Bernicia Tree Management:** 154 trees were removed in Ashington, all due to significant issues such as ash dieback, fungal infections, or unsuitable self-seeding. Bernicia planted 109 new trees earlier this year and plans to plant 3,000 trees over the next three years across their estates.

This proactive approach demonstrates Ashington Town Council's commitment to transparency and environmental stewardship, ensuring that tree management is handled responsibly. Officers will continue to work with both NCC and Bernicia to monitor tree health and contribute to replanting efforts that benefit the local community.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2024-08-02-ashington-town-council-addresses-tree-removal-concerns-quick-action-yields-facts>

### **Metal Recycling Initiative at North Seaton Colliery Allotments**

The Town Council is pleased to report the success of a recent metal recycling effort at North Seaton Colliery allotments. Led by our Allotment Officer, Alan Bunker, and with the support of dedicated allotment holders, significant metal waste accumulated over the years was collected and recycled, preventing it from ending up in landfill.

This initiative highlights the importance of sustainable practices in allotment management, promoting the "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" philosophy. The success of the metal recycling project has opened discussions about extending this approach to other materials, such as glass, and involving all allotment sites.

The Council appreciates the ongoing efforts of our allotment community and encourages further ideas for improving sustainability on allotments. Officers will continue to explore and implement effective waste management practices.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2024-08-14-town-council-applauds-successful-metal-recycling-at-north-seaton-colliery-allotments>

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### **Installation of New Bus Shelter Seating**

Ashington Town Council recently completed the installation of locally manufactured seating at two bus shelters in the town, demonstrating our commitment to sustainability and supporting local businesses. The seating, expertly crafted by Tony Webster of Webster's Workshop at Green Lane Workspace, provides a resting place for residents, improving accessibility and convenience for public transport users.

The seats were installed by the Council's Neighbourhood Services Officers, Mark Air and Ryan Appleby, saving costs by handling the installation in-house. This initiative reflects the Council's "local first" approach, reducing transportation emissions and external contractor expenses, while promoting sustainable solutions.

Further assessments of bus stops in Ashington will be undertaken to identify potential future seating installations. Additionally, a clean and minor repairs to other bus shelters are scheduled and taking place.

This project aligns with the Council's goals of encouraging greener travel and enhancing the quality of life for residents through practical, locally focused actions.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2024-10-01-new-bus-shelter-seating>

### **Support for Climate Action Wansbeck Allotment Project**

Ashington Town Council has actively supported Climate Action Wansbeck's allotment project at Wansbeck Road, providing both grant funding and hands-on assistance. In addition to the financial backing, the Council's Neighbourhood Services Officers, Mark Air and Ryan Appleby, worked alongside volunteers, assisting with heavy lifting and gravel spreading to prepare the site. Materials were sourced from the Council's local suppliers, further supporting our commitment to using local resources.

This initiative demonstrates the Council's approach of not only offering grant funding but also providing practical, measurable help. By actively participating in the project, the Council reinforces its commitment to promoting sustainability and supporting community-driven efforts.

A press release is ready to go out when photographs are available.

### **Celebrating Ashington's Charity Shops and Sustainable Shopping**

Following a suggestion from Administrative Assistant Gary Holmes, the Council's website was used to highlight the role of the town's charity shops in promoting sustainability and supporting the circular economy. These shops are becoming increasingly popular with younger residents and university students, who are turning to charity stores for affordable clothing and other items.

Representatives from Scope, Sense, and the British Heart Foundation reported an increase in younger customers, reflecting a growing trend toward sustainable shopping. Additionally, the charity shops are making significant contributions to waste reduction, with unusable items being recycled creatively. For example, some shops use rag merchants or repurpose materials for carpet under-lay, as noted by Claire from Sense and Christine from the Salvation Army.

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This initiative underscores the importance of charity shops in helping reduce waste while providing affordable goods to the community. The Council appreciates the hard work and dedication of these shops and encourages further use of these sustainable shopping options.

Thanks to Gary Holmes for the idea to spotlight this vital aspect of Ashington's community.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2024-09-11-one-persons-rubbish-is-another-persons-treasure-celebrating-ashingtons-charity-shops>