

## **AGENDA 7, Enc ii) OFFICERS UPDATE - 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

### **Annual Report 2023/24**

The report is available online, and we have hard copies that have been distributed to community hubs. We have kept some back so if there is somewhere that copies are not available, let us know.

### **Ashington Market**

Sarah updated the Markets Manager that as the market is a County Council responsibility our County Cllrs are going to suggest this is brought to the Local Area Council, adding that this was expected previously but wasn't placed so hopefully there will be some dialogue and addressing any concerns moving forward.

Markets manager responded seeking any further feedback on any other issues. Sarah responded to advise that Cllrs who witness 'issues' have been encouraged to share photographs. From a general perspective the issues being brought forward are appearance, encroaching, non-standard stalls, and what is being done to market the market. When the animating ashington is awarded, could there be some themed markets?

### **Allotments (Capital Works)**

Contractor has been contacted in relation to starting work on the site. No confirmed dates but looking to get the work carried out over the summer.

### **Allotments (General)**

We have written to Woodhorn Road allotment site contacts regarding new tenancies and agreements. We have dedicated three days in the Town Hall, and two weekends at the site to have agreements signed and database of plot holders and contacts details updated. This is expected to be an onerous task first time around. We are investing in a card machine to take payments to minimise cash handling and streamline the collection of rents.

We offered tenants the opportunity to come into the office to sign tenancies and pay rent across 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> June. We were pleased to welcome 21 different plot holders which gave a further opportunity to iron out any flaws in the system before we do the same from the hut on the last two weekends of June.

Our second Allotment week has seen some positive news, previously disused plots have been worked on to provide new plots for our ever-growing waiting lists! A lot of hard work has been carried out to return these plots into good order. Two plots at Hirst East End have new tenants and are raring to go!

Taps and tap boxes have also been replaced or repaired.

Improvements carried out at our Green Lane site, with the grass verge cut, cleared and litter picked.

Litter picks conducted on several sites, with help from our partners at NCC to remove the rubbish.

### **North Seaton Colliery Allotment (the trot)**

Sarah is periodically liaising with Advance Northumberland and their solicitors on the potential/draft easement over the trot. A draft has been presented to Advance Northumberland which was initially rejected by their solicitors as they take issue with the termination clause. The suggestion by them was that they re-write an easement agreement.

It was also suggested by them that they have prescriptive rights over the land and therefore have a right to continue to use the road without a formal agreement but agree that a formal agreement would

## **AGENDA 7, Enc ii) OFFICERS UPDATE - 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

be better. Sarah has initially indicated there would not be a problem with their solicitor drafting an easement agreement, as the primary objective is to reach a fair and reasonable agreement that addresses the needs of both sides. However, maintaining the position that prescriptive rights cannot be claimed over the land in question as the informal permission granted for the use of the road over several years undermines the "hostile" or "adverse" nature required for establishing prescriptive rights. Additionally, that a termination clause should be included.

Once we have an acceptable draft easement, this will be brought to Council. If we cannot agree on an acceptable draft easement the matter will be brought to Council.

### **Ashington Memorial Garden**

Officers met with members of the Regeneration Team, and Ryder Architects to look at how the memorial garden could be included in improvement works. The aim being to improve connectivity, public realm and to hopefully divert funding that would have been used to 'green' Station Road West to this more fitting use of funding.

A proposed plan is on the agenda.

### **ATC Neighbourhood Services**

Four new bus shelters have been installed, along with shelters being repaired, repainted, and deep cleaned.

We are also looking at seating in bus shelters. All new shelters are installed with adequate seating. We appreciate the decision to remove seating from several bus shelters around the town in an effort to deter anti-social behaviour and prevent groups from gathering in these public spaces. However, we must also consider the accessibility challenges this now creates for our elderly residents and those with limited mobility who rely on having a place to sit while waiting for the bus. Striking the right balance between ensuring public safety and accommodating vulnerable populations is an ongoing effort. We have been contacted where seats are missing and we are looking at the most feasible seating solutions, which will be brought back to Council.

### **Projects and Development**

#### ***Ashington Cricket Club Commemorative Tree Project***

Work is continuing on the project with all quotations received. The total cost of the project is £66,815, however, with support from local businesses and the offer of providing trees, by NCC, the total funding required to complete the project is £26,830.

The Assets & Development Manager has commenced working with the Chair of Ashington Cricket Club to attract this amount from external funding and donations. A letter of support has been requested from the Town Council

If funding is secured for the project a provisional date of Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2025 has been set for the unveiling event to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII.

#### ***Ashington Community Woods – Improvement Project***

As per the agreement of the Council, Stephen has met with interested parties to form a steering group, including participation from Friends of Ashington Community Woods, Ashington & Hirst Running Club, the Park Run Group, Groundwork NE & Cumbria and relevant County Council staff.

Work will initially improve the Miners Meadow area as well as possibly supporting other improvement works where possible such as drainage issues and in promoting walks/runs etc.

## AGENDA 7, Enc ii) OFFICERS UPDATE - 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024

### Skate Park Project

A site meeting is planned to take place in July with Shred The North. Shred The North have recently supported Blyth Town Council in the development of a significant Skate Park in the town.

### Bird Boxes

Mark and Ryan have made 100 ready to pack Bird Box kits, as well as improving the box front, creating ATC stamp for box, and improving the assembly instructions. All 60 of the woodland boxes are made and ready to be installed.

At the time of writing, we have written to 19 community groups. Schools will be contacted after the summer holidays. The boxes are packed up and ready to go, some having already been delivered.

Alligator Klub
Full Circle Food Eco Club
Ark Youth Club
Pride Action North
Escape Family Support
TEAM Residents Association
Mortal Fools - Creative Mondays
Teen Bar
Buzz Learning
Reiverdale Scouts

Ashington Girl Guiding Division
Talking Marras
Brightside
Being Woman
Veterans & Elders
Family Hub, Ashington Assemble
Get On Side, Hirst Welfare, YMCA and Family Hub
Wellbeing Wednesdays
Ashington Library

Groups have been advised that we will do our best to accommodate as many requests as possible, prioritising groups that align with our goals of promoting inclusivity, nature appreciation, and environmental stewardship. Also, that the boxes will be provided by the Council free of charge, and there should be no cost to members to participate in the activity.

We have assured groups that although we may not be able to supply bird box kits immediately, we have a commitment from Cllrs for further funding so more will become available when they can be made. We expect to have the first one hundred boxes made up by the end of June, and we would like to get them out as we have limited storage space. When space is available the next batch can be made.

### Events and Engagement

#### ***D Day Flag of Peace Raised***

Councillors and members of the public were invited to attend Ashington Memorial Garden on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June for the raising of the special commemorative flag signifying the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D Day.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2024-05-30-ashington-honours-80th-anniversary-of-d-day-landings-with-commemorative-flag>

#### ***Miners Picnic Memorial Service***

This was held on Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024. The Memorial Service started at 10.30am, with picnic activities starting afterwards.

The full time table for the day can be found on the ATC website at, [Ashington Town Council Meetings List](#)

#### ***Princes Trust***

Sharon met with a representative from the Prince's Trust recently. You can view all of the Prince's

## AGENDA 7, Enc ii) OFFICERS UPDATE - 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Trust services on their website here; [Confidence, courses, careers | The Prince's Trust \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](https://princes-trust.org.uk)

A representative from the Prince's Trust has been invited to the next Youth Services Gathering on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June.

### **Whistle Art Stop**

Sharon met with Alison from Whistle Art Stop recently. Alison is a local artist who has just recently relocated in Ashington from Haltwhistle.

Alison has already been working with community groups in Ashington to deliver art workshops and is currently looking for premises to set up a new art studio.

You can meet Alison in person at our Community Fair Day, where she will be delivering an art workshop throughout the day.

### **News Items (with links)**

[Civic Head Attends Ashington Male Voice Choir Concert](#)

[Northumberland Miners' Picnic Returns with Nostalgic Flair on 8th June](#)

[Ashington Gears Up for The Great Big Green Week](#)

[Ashington Town Council Publishes 2023/24 Annual Report](#)

[New Civic Head and Deputy for Ashington Town Council](#)

[Ashington Town Council Welcomes Newly Co-opted Councillor Gemma Hemsley](#)

[Ashington Honours 80th Anniversary of D-Day Landings with Commemorative Flag](#)

[Ashington Town Council Opens Second Round of £500 Small Grants for 2024/25](#)

[Temporary Traffic Disruption for Ashington Community Fair](#)

[Bus Shelter Improvements](#)

[TOWN COUNCIL SUPPORTS TALKING MARRAS](#)

[Reviving Traditions: Northumberland Miners' Picnic 2024 Shines Bright](#)

[Great Big Green Week a Sustainable Success at Ashington Tuesday Market](#)

### Facebook Page Overview

#### Page overview

Followers: 2,239

[Create a post](#) Last 28 days

Post reach ⓘ	43,907
Post engagement ⓘ	7,765
New followers ⓘ	55


[See Details](#)

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#### Top post

Last 28 days [See all](#)

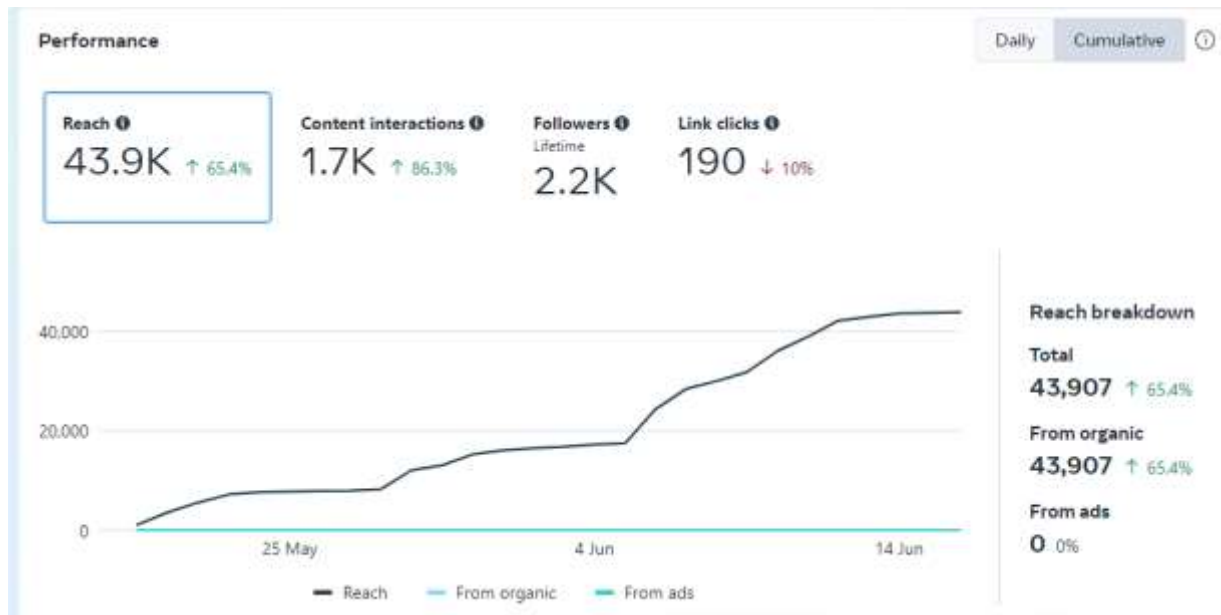
Boost this post to reach up to 2657 more people with every £14 that you spend.



<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2024-05-29-ashington-town-council-welcomes-newly-co-opted-councillor-...>

Published by Clerk Ashington · 29 May at 16:50 · 🌐

Post impressions	Post reach	Post engagement
5,473	5,353	2,036



# AGENDA 7, Enc ii) OFFICERS UPDATE - 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024

## Benchmarking

Facebook

### Business comparison

Businesses to watch

### Compare your performance against businesses in the Government agencies category

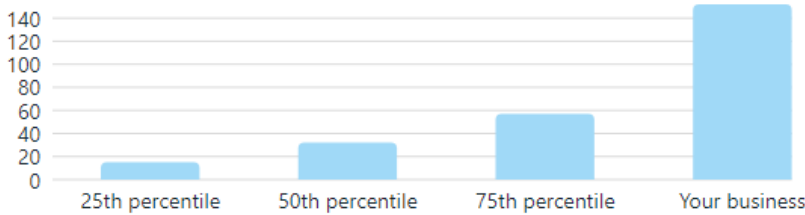
Results are based on businesses with similar organic 28-day reach in your category. [Edit category](#)

#### Published content ⓘ

# 152

Higher than others

#### How often your business published versus others in this category



Over the last 28 days, you typically published more posts and stories compared to other businesses in this category. Keep up the great work by scheduling content in advance.

Create Post

## Top 4 for reach and reaction

Title	Date published ↑↓	Reach ⓘ ↑↓	Likes and reactions
Ashington is going wild for wildflowers! 🌸 W... Ashington Town Council	21 May 12:07	6.3K Reach	94 Reactions
<a href="https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/new...">https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/new...</a> Ashington Town Council	29 May 16:50	5.4K Reach	57 Reactions
Regatta Success! 🏆🏆 Cambois Rowing Club cre... Ashington Town Council	10 June 09:29	12K Reach	40 Reactions
Ashington Bus Shelter Improvements Coming in J... Ashington Town Council	6 June 11:40	19.1K Reach	40 Reactions