

AGENDA 8, Enc iii) CCE OFFICER UPDATE

Ashington Town Council Pledges Support for Community-Led Enhancement of Ashington Community Woods

Demonstrating our commitment to support local stakeholders and woodland users, we have pledged just under £4,000 from dedicated project funds towards the Project Development Phase of Ashington Community Woods.

The investment, combined with additional funding from Ward Councillors' Environment Enhancements budget, will support comprehensive consultation, steering group management and the preparation of funding applications.

Beginning in April 2025, this will bring together regular woodland user, community groups and residents to shape the plans for enhancing valuable green space.

Backs by County Councillor Caroline Ball and County Councillor Brian Gallacher as part of the steering committee, we expect more stakeholders will want to be directly involved alongside Northumberland County Council, Friends of Ashington Commit Woods, Ashington Hirst Running Club and local historian Barry Mead.

Key elements of the collaborative approach include:

- In-depth consultation with current woodland users and stakeholders
- Development of user-led proposals for signage and orientation features
- Community input on heritage interpretation elements
- Collaborative planning of enhanced visitor facilities
- Exploration of public art and sculpture opportunities

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2025-02-06-ashington-town-council-pledges-support-for-community-led-enhancement-of-ashington-community-woods>

Successful Day of Action in the Hirst Area

With the help of Cllr Caroline Ball, Cllr Gemma Hemsley, Cllr Marjorie Chambers and Ashington Town Council officers Stephen Humphrey, Alan Bunker, Ryan Appleby and Mark Air supported our partners: Ashington Community Litter Pickers, Northumberland County Council, Asda and Bernicia. 38 bags of litter were collected and disposed of after a fantastic community effort to keep the Hirst Area clean.

Northumberland County Council's Neil Quinn and Gary McGuire led a consultation of the Hirst Masterplan, supported by Cllr Pauline Thompson, allowing residents the opportunity to discuss future plans for the area.

Northumberland Police were the catalyst for the whole day, bringing everyone together, with Operation Impact making several arrests and vehicle seizures as part of their ongoing commitment to community safety.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2024-12-20-successful-day-of-action-in-the-hirst-area>

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Winter Maintenance Update: Embracing Sustainable Planting in Our Town

With the dedication of Neighbourhood Services Officers – Mark Air and Ryan Appleby, the sustainable planting scheme has made significant progress over the winter months, but we know to all eyes it may not look as beautiful as formal annual planting. Embracing the sustainable, climate-friendly planting we have managed to maintain sustainable beds along Station Road, the Town gateways and alongside our memorials.

Maintenance is ongoing year-round to ensure they are kept looking tidy while also encouraging the natural cycles of the plants.

The structural elements of our chosen plants – seed heads, architectural structural stems and evergreen foliage - create winter interest while providing valuable habitats for local wildlife.

This approach aligns with our broader climate action goals and creates resilient landscapes that support local biodiversity.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2024-12-19-winter-maintenance-update-embracing-sustainable-planting-in-our-town>

Ashington Town Council Maintains Iconic Mining Wheel Entrance Feature

We have reaffirmed our commitment to maintaining Town assets with a recent tidy-up and planting project at the iconic Mining Wheel on Rotary Parkway.

Neighbourhood Services Officer – Ryan Appleby, has used his horticultural expertise to lead the recent improvements.

Using a selection of locally sourced plants from Wansbeck Garden Centre, he has managed to enhance the features of the site with fresh foliage that complements the historic display.

Ryan has further ideas for improvements to the surrounding landscape, which he hopes to introduce as the planting calendar allows.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2024-11-01-ashington-town-council-maintains-iconic-mining-wheel-entrance-feature>

Support for Climate Action Wansbeck Allotment Project

It was approved to further fund the Climate Action Wansbeck orchard project at the Wansbeck Road Allotment Site.

The area has been transformed from derelict plots to the start of an orchard, led by Mrs Margaret Adams and Mrs Lynn Norris. Funds were secured by the two from various sources as well as our contribution to the project to support landscaping and fencing costs.

When preparatory work is fully complete, fruit trees will be provided by the Great Northumberland Forest Project.

Neighbourhood Services Officers – Mark Air and Ryan Appleby, both worked alongside the volunteers on the project, assisting in preparing the paths, with materials supplied by JT Dove Ltd. further reinforcing our commitment to using local resources and labour.

Working alongside volunteer groups such as Climate Action Wansbeck helps solidify our commitment to foster a greener, more sustainable future for Ashington.

You can view the images of the work done by following the link below.

AGENDA 8, Enc iii) CCE OFFICER UPDATE

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2024-10-31-town-council-supports-climate-action-wansbeck-project>

The 2025 Big Garden Birdwatch

The annual Big Garden Birdwatch was held again by The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds over the weekend of 24th January/25th January 2025.

At the time of writing, there have been 7,899,799 birds counted and registered during their survey result collection.

Following our commitment to a greener Ashington, we have encouraged residents to take part in the survey and to count the local birds to support the efforts of sustaining our local bird life.

Northumberland currently sits at number 34 on their siting leaderboard, with 3,292 birds spotted and accounted for.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2025-01-14-the-2025-big-garden-birdwatch>

Help Shape the Response to Fly-Tipping: Community Survey

Northumberland County Council's Safe and Resilient Communities Team have reached out to the community to understand and address issues of fly-tipping around our local areas.

The survey has been developed to help Northumberland County Council:

- Identify key issues and concerns from a resident's perspective.
- Gather information about community awareness and understanding.
- Help shape the approach to tackling fly-tipping.

Responses given to the survey before 25th January 2025 will ensure resident's views are included in future planning.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2025-01-15-help-shape-the-response-to-fly-tipping-community-survey>

ScottishPower Renewables' Celebrates Sustainable Community Development in Ashington

ScottishPower Renewables is committed to supporting local communities with its benefit fund having distributed over £67 million to date.

A while ago a grant of £25,000 from the Lynemouth Windfarm fund allowed us to redevelop two residential play areas within the Orchid Meadows Estate. Featuring Kompan's cutting-edge Greenline range of play equipment, this was the perfect blend of environmental responsibility and community development. The play areas showcase play equipment manufactured from recycled materials and promoted an inclusive design to allow children of all abilities to play within the play area.

We were delighted that the project featured in ScottishPower Renewables' Community Benefit Report.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2025-01-13-scottishpower-renewables-celebrates-sustainable-community-development-in-ashington>