

AGENDA 13, Enc xvii) Miners Memorial Meadow

At the Climate Change & Environment Committee on 30th April 2024:

It was AGREED to RECEIVE a proposal to lead on the restoration of the Miners' Memorial Meadows in Ashington Community Woods, and to set aside a seed fund of £3,000 from the Climate Change budget.

It was also AGREED to form a project steering group with key stakeholders including but not limited to; Groundwork North East, Northumberland County Council (NCC), Friends of Ashington Community Woods, Ashington Parkrun, and Ashington Hirst Running Club to guide the revitalisation efforts.

It was AGREED to initiate a site assessment with Groundwork North East and NCC to evaluate the current condition of the meadows and determine the specific improvements and maintenance required to restore them to a fitting memorial state.

Prior to the site meeting the proposed actions were:

1. Form a project steering group with key stakeholders including but not limited to; Groundwork North East, Northumberland County Council (NCC), Friends of Ashington Community Woods, Ashington Parkrun, and Ashington Hirst Running Club to guide the revitalisation efforts.
2. Conduct a site assessment with Groundwork North East and NCC to evaluate the current condition of the meadows and determine the specific improvements and maintenance required to restore them to a fitting memorial state.
3. Develop a comprehensive revitalisation plan and budget based on the site assessment, incorporating elements such as:
 - Wildflower seeding/planting
 - Restored signage and interpretive elements
 - Ongoing maintenance plan
4. Implement an engagement strategy throughout the project, involving volunteers, schools, community groups, and running clubs in activities like meadow preparation, planting, maintenance, etc.
5. Host an official re-dedication event upon completion to celebrate the revitalised Miners' Memorial Meadows as a community space for remembrance and reflection.

By taking a collaborative approach with committed stakeholders and the community, this project can successfully restore the Miners' Memorial Meadows to a beautiful, meaningful tribute honouring Ashington's mining heritage and sacrifices during WWI.

Following that site meeting, the aim of the project was altered in view of drainage issues, but in keeping with the desire to improve the Miners Memorial Meadow. The revised aim is to carry out general improvement works in Ashington Community Woods that will support existing users and increase positive usage of the woodland moving forward.

Highlights from site meeting

The meeting highlighted significant concerns regarding drainage issues, which is severely limiting usage by the running organisations in winter months but also increasingly in summer months with more frequent heavy shower.

The meeting also highlighted possible works to improve the woodland, particularly the Miners' Meadow area and the encouragement of further positive usage by developing walking routes through the woodland.

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The meeting agreed on the following key objectives:

- ❖ Improve drainage on main pathway in the woodland.
- ❖ Restore the Miners Memorial Meadow and develop a structure to detail the history of the colliery site, reclamation works and the symbolism of the Miners' Meadow.
- ❖ Develop walking trails in the woods using QR technology.

Proposal

It is proposed that the FGS Committee (*delegated by Full Council to receive this report that would ordinarily go back to the Climate Change and Environment Committee*) agree the following:

1. To confirm the seed funding of £3,000 be allocated towards the revised aims as detailed above.
2. To allocate staff resources to lead project co-ordination, funding efforts (supporting groups where this would be appropriate), liaison with stakeholders, and overall project management.
3. To seek and receive quotations for the works to deliver the project, in consultation with NCC as landowner.
4. To lead and co-ordinate on the delivery of an information board to ensure accuracy in detailing the history of the site as part of the improvements to the Miners' Meadow area.
5. To receive a full breakdown of the costs of delivery as soon as available.