

Life in Ashington

Spring 2021



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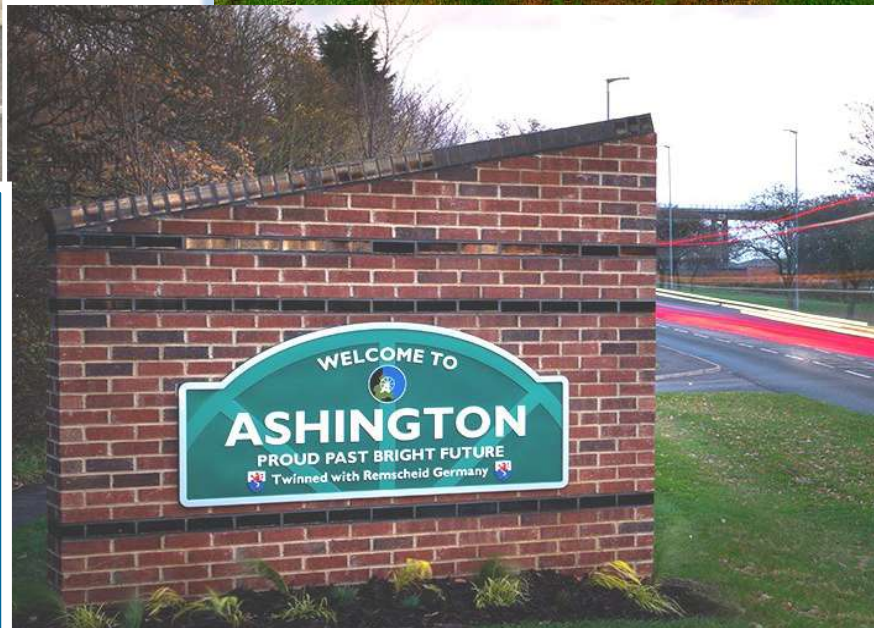
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WELCOME TO ISSUE 1 OF THE *LIFE IN ASHINGTON* E NEWSLETTER



A Message from the Business Chair of Ashington Town Council

It is hard to believe that this week saw the UK marking one year since the first Coronavirus lockdown, with Her Majesty the Queen and many others nationally, regionally and locally reflecting on the ‘grief, loss and suffering felt by so many’.

It is right therefore that we reflect on what has been an unprecedented and challenging time that has impacted on us all in so many ways.

Across all age groups we have had to adhere to new way-of-life rules and regulations and adapt to new terms of ‘social distancing, shielding and self-isolating’. We have also had to learn to communicate in different ways and embrace social media while we await news of appointments to vaccination centres. In such challenging times we recognise the efforts and support of all residents in the town over the last year and the real sense of community spirit that has come to the fore throughout the pandemic.

On behalf of the Town Council and all residents I would like to pay special tribute to all key workers and organisations who have worked tirelessly in Ashington and locally to deliver front-line services. In particular, we all have a debt of gratitude to the incredible staff of the National Health Service. I am sure you will join me in recognising them all as our own local heroes who have put the nation’s health before their own every day – never have we appreciated this more than at the current time of crisis when we have all been vulnerable.

During this time, we have done our best at the Town Council to safely maintain a level of service and carry forward improvement projects in the town, some of which you will read about in the following pages.

There are some encouraging news stories with the progress of the Northumberland Rail Link and plans for major inward economic investment. There are also more immediate and very real challenges with the prospect of high street demise and changes in the way we shop. The Town Council on your behalf will look to work with all partners to address these issues and to start to finally see real change and positive development in the Town Centre.

It is going to be a challenge for us all for some time to come and difficult times will lie ahead. It is important therefore that we work together positively as best we can to ensure recovery and a future that provides a town where community remains important and where individuals and businesses prosper and succeed.

Cllr. Mark Purvis - Business Chair

If you would like to contact Ashington Town Council

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Town Council Supports COVID-19 Project

Northumberland Communities Together Project



Ashington Town Council has assisted with the transportation of food and toiletries for people across SE Northumberland through the Northumberland Communities Together project.

At the commencement of the coronavirus pandemic Northumberland County Council launched Northumberland Communities Together. The project aims to make sure residents of the county are kept safe and well throughout the crisis and coordinates support for volunteers, voluntary groups and communities. A key task for the project was ensuring that those in need received essential food and toiletries.

Significant donations of foods and toiletries were made for Ashington and the wider South East Northumberland area via the social media group *Ponteland Community*. The group of volunteers come together to offer support to those in need during the pandemic. A request for donations was made via their Facebook site and the group were delighted with the response. The volunteers were also supported by the Hilton Double Tree Hotel, at Newcastle airport, in their efforts.



Ashington Town Council staff and Councillors worked in partnership with Communities Together and made numerous food runs transporting donations onto organisations meeting need, such as Real Deal Plus, based at the Ashington Life Centre.



Pictured above, is Ashington's Town & County Councillor Lynne Grimshaw (Bothal Ward) and Neighbourhood Services Officer, Garry Maddison, collecting donations for distribution from the Double Tree Hotel.

Fiona Wardlow, the then Locality Co-ordinator at Communities Together, said *'We really appreciated the efforts of Ashington Town Council's staff and councillors in ensuring that food and toiletries quickly went to those in need in the Ashington area'*.

Kath Falcus, from Real Deal Plus, added *'It's really good to see everyone working together so those in need do not go without essential food and toiletries. We appreciate the on-going support of the Town Council as well as the kind donations of food and toiletries, including those from the Ponteland community which will go to those in need'*.

Town Council Support For Those In Need

Ashington Town Council has made targeted grants available to organisations working to address need in the town during the winter months. A focus of the grant giving has been supporting organisations involved in addressing the Covid-19 pandemic across all age groups and needs.

A number of organisations have benefitted from grants including the Ashington Learning Partnership, Friends of Bothal Primary School, Heart of the Hirst Tenant & Residents Group, Real Deal Plus and the Being Woman group who provide support to the BAME community.



Funding to the Ashington Learning Partnership has supported social distance learning. The support has provided the children with good quality lap top computers and associated assistance to aid their studies. The equipment will assist the children through the pandemic and beyond.

Funding to Real Deal Plus has supported a range of services for disadvantaged individuals and families. Funding from the Town Council has supported the emergency foodbank, a homeless project, as well as helping elderly members of the community. In the photograph (above) is Cllr. Pauline Thompson providing a cheque to Mr Davey Falcus from the organisation.

The Town Council has also provided financial support to the Heart of the Hirst Group and Friends of Bothal Primary School towards the purchase of Christmas gifts for children in the town as well as providing practical support to the Salvation Army's Christmas Toy Appeal.

Cllr. Lynne Grimshaw, Chair of the Finance & General Services Committee, said *'The Town Council is pleased to work in partnership with a number of organisations to ensure that those in need are supported in these difficult times. We thank all the organisations and volunteers working across our town who are supporting residents at this time. The Town Council also supports a number of charities annually, such as the Wansbeck Valley Foodbank and Citizens' Advice Northumberland, with funding of almost £50,000 in this financial year. We believe this makes a significant contribution to their work in the town.'*

Additionally, several grants have been made to organisations to enable them to get up and going with activities when Covid-19 restrictions are finally eased.

Grants have recently been given to Parkhead & Wansbeck Powersports (photograph below) and Cambois Rowing Club. Mr Fred Mackenzie, Chair of the Powersports Group, said *'We look forward to again providing low cost, health and fitness activities for our community and we really value the Town Council's support.'*



Improvements To Play Areas

Like most Town and Parish Councils, Ashington Town Council has responsibility for all matters relating to the majority of children's play areas in the town.

The Town Council carries out repairs and maintenance to 10 play areas with a rolling programme of improvements. Northumberland County Council retains responsibility for the provision and maintenance of play areas in the town's strategic parks at Hirst Park and Wansbeck Riverside Park.

Further to the development of the new Peoples Park Play Area project a number of improvement projects have recently taken place including works at the Aintree Close, Bywell Road and Paddock Wood Play Areas.

The Town Council is also working with Northumberland County Council in looking to make significant improvements to the Wansbeck Riverside Paly Area to support the recent regeneration of this valued green space.

Cllr. Matthew Cuthbert, Leader of Ashington Town Council, said *'The recent works ensure that the Town Council continues to provide good quality play facilities for the town's young people and we do hope both children and parents welcome the new additions'*.



In the photographs, above, are Cllrs. Marjorie and Nicola Chambers (Haydon Ward) and Cllr. Bob Walkinshaw (Bothal Ward) viewing the recent works.

Seaton Vale Tidy Up

Well done to the Seaton Vale Residents Group!

The group have recently carried out a litter pick of the estate. The Town Council provided the equipment and refuse bags and Cllr. Jim Lang (Seaton Ward) went along to assist, with over 14 bags of rubbish collected on the day.

The Town Council organises litter picks as part of Keep Britain Tidy's annual campaign. Keep an eye on the Town Council website for details (Covid-19 dependent).



New Floral Displays In The Town

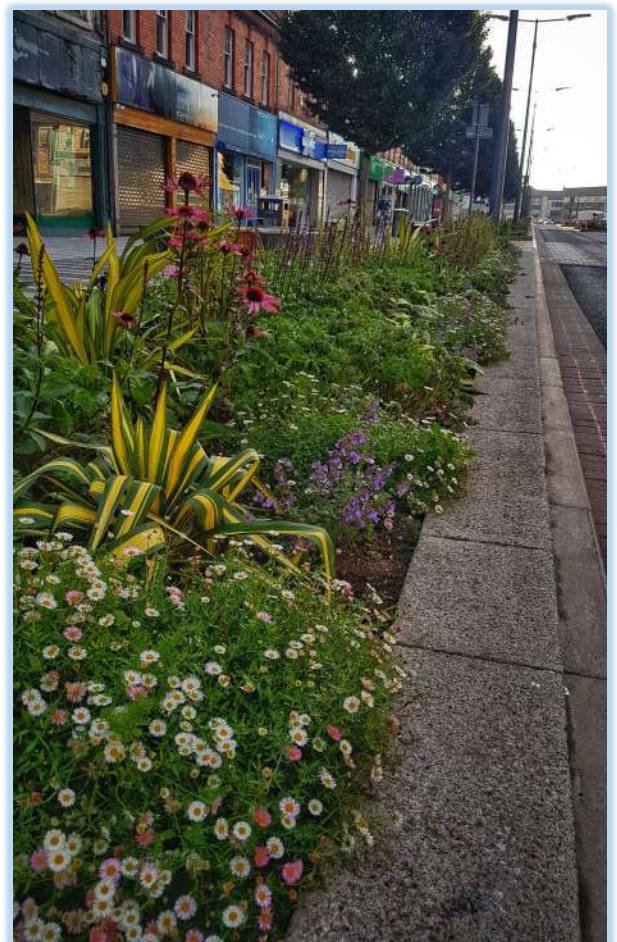
In 2020 Ashington Town Council took responsibility for the provision of floral displays and presentations in the town with an initial focus on the town centre.

Following on from an options appraisal report the Town Council appointed a Horticultural Officer, whose role is to oversee and carry out work on the floral displays and presentations on Station Road as well as improving the range of displays across the town.

Work started on the raised beds on Station Road in March last year, which were cleared of flora and weeds in preparation of 25 tonnes of new top soil and organic matter. The usable removed flora was used to enhance existing displays in the town including the Ashington Memorial Garden and Mining Wheel Feature, with 85% of the usable plants replanted. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic and implications on wholesalers and retailers work progressed and was completed for the summer.

Working in partnership with the Wansbeck Garden Centre & Café, the Town Council has also placed a number of flower towers and planters around the town and on main routes around Ashington. There are more plans for improvements and enhancements in the coming months and years.

Northumberland County Council continues to retain responsibility for the provision of displays at the town's strategic parks (Hirst Park, QEII Country Park and Wansbeck Riverside Park).



Ashington Garden Competition 2020

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic the Town Council were pleased to again organise the popular garden competition in 2020, albeit in a different format.

The Town Council decided to take a 'leaf' from the Chelsea Flower Show and held a 'virtual' competition last year.

The Ashington Garden Competition is open to all residents of the town and entrants to the competition, last year, were asked to submit photographs or a short video of their garden.

There were four categories; Large Garden, Small Garden, Allotment Garden and Kids Corner (for children and young people who look after all or part of a garden).



Cllr. Mark Purvis, Business Chair of Ashington Town Council, said *'Since the Town Council reintroduced the competition a number of years ago it has generated real and growing interest. We watched the success of the virtual RHS Chelsea Flower Show and despite the limitations of Covid-19 we decided to run the competition to raise awareness of some of the fantastic gardens in our town, which do much to improve the quality of life for residents.'*



Cllr. Lawrence Henderson, Civic Head, adds *'Despite Covid-19 we received a number of entries in all four categories and the obvious work and commitment shown by residents in their gardens was outstanding. Ashington Town Council therefore decided to recognise everyone who submitted an application, by providing them with a formal Certificate of Recognition and a gift voucher for the Wansbeck Garden Centre & Café.'*



The Town Council would like to thank everyone who entered the 2020 competition and urges them and others to keep an eye on the Town Council website for details of the 2021 competition. Obviously the format will be dependent on Covid-19 guidance and regulations.

The Town Council would also like to thank the Wansbeck Garden Centre & Café, based on North Seaton Industrial Estate, for their continued support of the Competition which is very much appreciated and valued.

New Litter Bins

Further works to install new litter bins around the town have been carried out by Ashington Town Council.

In 2020, new bespoke litterbins were installed in the bus interchange area to match existing town centre bins. In the photograph, to the right, is Cllr. Eleanor Armstrong (Central Ward) inspecting the work.

We regularly receive requests for new or replacement bins across the town. Residents in the Greencroft area recently identified a litter issue and requested the Town Council to provide a new litter bin in the area. In the photograph, below, is Cllr. Brian Gallacher (Haydon Ward) and local resident Mrs Gloria Leitch with the new litter bin.



There are now over 500 litter bins in Ashington provided by the Town Council. Northumberland County Council retains responsibility for the emptying of all of the bins.

Residents can report litter, fly tipping and other neighbourhood issues by visiting Northumberland County Council's website at; www.northumberland.gov.uk.

Deep Clean of Bus Shelters

Ashington Town Council has undertaken an enhanced cleansing regime of the town's bus shelters to minimise the risk of the spread of Covid-19.

Some studies have found that the Covid-19 virus can survive on metal, glass and plastic for up to nine days.

It's important therefore we remain vigilant and residents can report any concerns direct to the Town Council



Paddock Wood Improvement Project

Significant works have recently taken place to improve Paddock Wood in North Seaton.

New equipment, safety surface and seating has been installed in the play area. In the photograph, to the right, is Cllr. Avril Chisholm, Cllr. Jim Lang and Neighbourhood Services Officer Garry Maddison inspecting one of the new items 'Truck'. The project was developed following requests to Seaton Ward Councillors to provide additional play equipment specifically for toddlers and younger children.



In addition to the improvements in the play area, work has also taken place to the wider Paddock Wood park to improve some of the pathways as well as the installation of new, robust litterbins.

The works have been overseen by Seaton Town and County Councillor Jim Lang supported by Town Councillors Avril Chisholm and Kris Lavery. The recent works to the pathways and some of the new equipment in the play area has been directly funded by Cllr. Lang's County Council small improvements scheme.



The Paddock Wood area is a valuable local asset but sadly, continues to suffer from some anti-social behaviour and vandalism with recent damage to litter bins and nearby property. The Town Council is working with Northumbria Police and the Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service to tackle these issues and also encourages residents who witness any incident to call the Police on 101 or in an emergency 999.



Improvement Works At Allotment Sites

The Town Council continues to work with Allotment Associations in improving the quality of allotment provision in the town.

The Town Council has statutory responsibility for allotment provision with eight sites across the town. Seven of these sites are managed on a day-to-day basis through a range of agreements with Allotment Associations.

Many residents enjoy allotment gardening and the many benefits it provides. There has also been an increase in residents requesting an allotment garden and throughout the recent Covid-19 pandemic, allotment gardens have provided a welcoming place for many plot holders and their families.



A number of improvement projects have taken place at allotment sites over the past few months with the Town Council supporting the Associations in their endeavours.

The Wansbeck Road Allotment Association has carried out an improvement project to the site boundary and roadways. North Seaton Colliery Allotment Association have carried out a project to bring redundant plots back into use and in the photograph (top right) are committee members Louis Brown and Peter Jobson with Cllr. Jim Lang inspecting the works. The Woodhorn Road Allotment Association have also carried out works to improve water taps on their site.

Volunteers from the committee at the High Market Allotment Site, with the support of plot holders, have recently cleared redundant plots



so they can be let as well tidying paths and roadways across the site. The committee have also made improvements to a container, which serves plot holders with garden supplies.

Carol Ridley, of High Market Allotment Association, said *'The benefits of allotment gardening are widely recognised and the Association is pleased to work with the Town Council to improve the site for our members and their families. The recent restrictions has seen an increased interest in allotment gardening and all of the benefits of growing fresh fruit and vegetables in a pleasant environment.'*

Cllr. Matthew Cuthbert, Leader of Ashington Town Council, adds *'We know that allotment gardening is valued by many residents and we are pleased with the successful outcome of recent projects. We thank all the committee members and volunteers who manage the sites on a day-to-day basis and appreciate their work in improving the sites for the benefit of all plot holders and their families.'*

For more information on allotment gardening in Ashington visit the Town Council website.



Commemorative Tree Planting Project

A commemorative tree planting scheme took place in Ashington, last year, to mark the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day.

A total of 75 trees were planted around the grounds of Ashington Cricket Club and at Peoples Park. The project was developed and funded by Ashington Town Council, working in partnership with Ashington Cricket Club and the Ashington Branch of the Royal British Legion.

The Cricket Ground was originally presented to the Town as a memorial to those from Ashington who gave their lives in the two World Wars. At that time 150 trees were planted at the Cricket Club and Peoples Park to recognise those from the town who had lost their lives in WWII.

In 2015, when the project took place to develop a new War Memorial for Ashington, full research was undertaken which resulted in a further 25 names being added to the WWII Memorial totalling 175 individuals. The new trees have replaced those that have been lost over the years as well as properly recognising the recently added names and restoring the direct link to the memory of those who gave their lives from the town.

Mr Phillip Rainger, Chair of the Ashington Branch of the Royal British Legion, said 'The

planting of the trees is a truly fitting memorial to those from Ashington who lost their lives in WWII. We thank the Town Council as well as the volunteers who had committed to help with the planting before the coronavirus lockdown. When restrictions are finally lifted we do plan to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day and this project'.

Mr Bob Dunning, Chair of Ashington Cricket Club, adds 'The Cricket Club is very aware that the grounds were given to the town as a memorial to those who gave their lives in the two world wars. The scheme has undoubtedly enhanced the grounds and it is poignant that the work was completed for the 75th Anniversary of VE Day'.

Cllr. Matthew Cuthbert, Leader of Ashington Town Council, concluded 'Despite the lockdown we were delighted to have completed the project and thank the Royal British Legion and the Cricket Club for their help. The tree planting scheme also fits with the Town Council's climate change agenda as we look to carry out projects that will improve the environment of our town and contribute to this global challenge'.



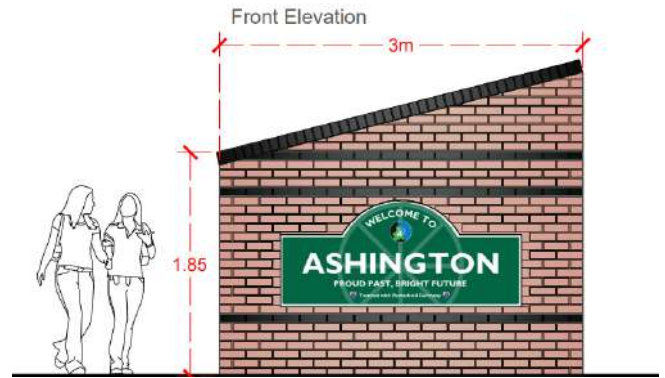
New Entrance Features For Ashington

You will by now have noticed two new entrance features welcoming visitors and residents to Ashington.

The features on the B1334 (North Seaton entrance) and A196 (Stakeford entrance) were designed and funded by Ashington Town Council and were erected in late 2020.

The new features complement the existing entrance features into the town, situated on the A197, at the Pegswood and Woodhorn roundabout entrances.

The features display the strapline 'Proud Past Bright Future' which was developed as part of the town's 150th Anniversary celebrations in 2017. The celebrations at that time recognised the town's heritage as well as looking forward to a positive and brighter future.



The new features also have a reminder that Ashington is twinned with the Remscheid area in Germany. The links between Ashington, Newbiggin by the Sea and the City of Remscheid go back to the early 1950's with the relationship one of the first to be developed between British and German communities after WWII. The aim is to promote understanding and friendship between the two communities.

Further planting will take place at the features in the summer to give a colourful welcome when entering the town.



Photograph by Ashington resident Mr Keith Saint.

Jack Charlton OBE DL

In July 2020 the residents of Ashington lined the streets to pay their respects to a football legend, and one of our own, Jack Charlton OBE DL.

Jack was part of the successful England football team that won the World Cup in 1966 together with his brother Bobby. He then went on to manage the Republic of Ireland national team from 1986 to 1996. In more than 20 years with Leeds United, he made over 700 appearances and won the 1969 league title and FA Cup in 1972.

Jack died peacefully at his home in Northumberland with his family by his side, at the age of 85, on the 10 July. Jack's funeral cortege visited Ashington to provide an opportunity for the town to say a final goodbye before the funeral at Newcastle Crematorium.

His son John said at the time *'Many will know that, as a family, we wanted to give local people the opportunity to say goodbye to Jack and pay their respects before he's laid to rest. Jack was incredibly proud of his hometown, which is why we made the decision to take the funeral cortege around Ashington.'*



You may recall a public funding initiative was started to raise money towards a statue of Jack in the town. The fund is now close to £40,000 and expressions of interest from sculptors will soon be invited. Ashington Town Council will report when further progress is made on the project.



The Town Council is also delighted that Northumberland County Council have agreed to work on a separate commemoration of the 1966 World Cup achievements of both Jack and Bobby. Both projects have paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic but we are hopeful to get them back on track in the coming months.

Northumbria Police Update



Phil Patterson, Neighbourhood Inspector for Ashington, reports on a successful few months as officers work hard to rid the area of drugs and promote road safety.

In recent months over £2m worth of drugs have been seized by our officers. The seizures come as part of Operation Momentum, a large scale initiative to target organised criminality with an emphasis on ridding the streets of drugs.

Northumbria Police is committed to keeping drugs off our streets and encourages residents who suspect drug supply operations – such as cannabis farms – operating in their neighbourhood to contact officers. In the last three months we have shut down six farms.

Reporting means you are not only helping to keep Ashington free of drugs but you're also protecting your neighbours from potentially lethal setups. The electricity is regularly by-passed at properties acting as cannabis farms, creating a huge fire risk.

We are pleased to announce that funding has now been secured to employ a drug outreach worker to work solely in the Ashington area. Their focus will be on educating and supporting the community and we believe this is a welcome addition.

Road safety is also a top priority for our Force and those caught driving without insurance or unfit through drink or drugs risk having their car seized. In recent month's we have seized over 150 cars in the Ashington area and we make no apology for this action.

During the festive season our motor patrol officers successfully took part in the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) road safety campaign. The campaign is a festive crackdown on those who drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol and takes place every year with police carrying out random stops.



I am also deeply thankful to the overwhelming majority of people in Ashington who have followed the rules and regulations around Covid-19. Now, however, is not the time to get complacent. Please ensure compliance with all regulations and guidance and look to stay safe.

You can contact the Police by visiting the Northumbria Police website or by calling; 101. In an emergency always call; 999.

You can also give information regarding criminality in your area anonymously by contacting Crimestoppers at; www.crimestoppers-uk.org or by calling; 0800 555 111.

Phil Patterson
Inspector Neighbourhood Policing

Love Ashington Not Fly Tipping

In November 2020 an initiative was launched by Northumberland County Council and Ashington Town Council to raise awareness of fly-tipping. Sadly a continuing problem and challenge in and around the town as well as the wider region and country.

Over 2,000 leaflets were distributed by officers in the Hirst area which particularly suffers from this issue. Dumping rubbish is illegal and it could ultimately cost you a £400 fine if you receive a fixed penalty notice. Fly tipping and dropping litter is not only unsightly but is particularly dangerous to children, wildlife and the environment.



The leaflet provides practical advice and guidance, as follows, and can also be found on the Town Council website;

- **If waste items are small enough put them in the household waste bin.**
- **Larger waste items can be taken to Household Waste Recovery Centres (tips) with the nearest at North Seaton Industrial Estate in Ashington (NE63 0XL).**
- **Use Northumberland County Council's bulky waste collection service.**
- **Many retailers selling white goods take away old appliances – ask when you buy a new one.**
- **If you pay someone to take away your unwanted items, ensure they are reputable with a waste carriers' certificate.**
- **Take unwanted items to a charity shop where they can be resold, reused or recycled (Covid-19 dependent).**

Ashington Town Council and Northumberland County Council are working jointly to provide environmental enforcement, with an increased presence across the town. In the photograph, below, are Hirst Ward Councillors Victor Bridges, Pauline Thompson and Ken Parry with members of the Environmental Enforcement Team



Cllr. Ken Parry said 'We know litter and fly-tipping annoys many residents as well as endangering young people, wildlife and our environment. This leaflet provides practical advice on disposing of rubbish both quickly and safely. We encourage all residents to follow this advice.'

To report an issue with fly-tipping or litter please visit the Northumberland County Council website at; www.northumberland.gov.uk

Northumberland Rail Line Update

The first planning applications for the new Northumberland Rail Line have been submitted.

In January, an announcement of funding of £34m was made by the Department for Transport for the Northumberland Rail Line. This announcement gives the go-ahead to reintroduce a regular rail passenger service between Ashington and the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne, with several stops in between and linking into the national rail network.

Northumberland County Council is leading the project, in partnership with Network Rail. The project will upgrade 18 miles of track, open six new stations, three new footbridges with new signal locations. It is anticipated that the whole scheme will deliver economic benefits of up to £470m to the area.

The planning applications for new stations at Ashington and Northumberland Park (in North Tyneside), along with a new footbridge in Bebside have now been submitted.

Cllr. Matthew Cuthbert, Leader of Ashington Town Council, said '*The re-introduction of a passenger rail service from Ashington to Newcastle upon Tyne has been a long held hope and ambition of the Town Council and residents for many years. The Town Council would also like to thank residents for taking the time to take part in the recent consultation exercise. We welcome the submission of the planning applications and seeing the passenger rail line become a reality.*

Subject to approvals and final funding it is hoped that the construction phase of the project will commence in early 2022.



New development at Ashwood Business Park —

Work will soon commence to build a new convenience store, petrol station and drive through Starbucks at Ashwood Business Park.

The multi-million pound scheme will be developed by Euro Garages with a 8,000 sq ft hub at the business park, close to the A189, just south of North Seaton roundabout.



A new access is to be created off the Ashwood Drive roundabout, with the petrol station and shop located on the northern section of the site and the coffee shop towards the southern boundary. The shops will create 30 jobs and a further 35 will come through construction work.

Ashwood Business Park is owned by Advance Northumberland and is designated a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Enterprise Zone, which means that organisations locating there can benefit from 100% Enhanced Capital Allowances.

New £2.6 Billion Gigaplant Development —

Ashington Town Council welcomes news of the proposed new gigaplant development at the nearby former Blyth Power station site at Cambois.

Britishvolt, which specialises in battery technologies, has selected the site for the UK's first gigaplant and intends to begin construction in 2021 so that lithium-ion batteries, for electric cars, can be in production by the end of 2023.



The company plans to employ 3,000 highly skilled workers, while up to 5,000 more jobs are expected from the wider supply chain.

The overall investment totals £2.6bn though funding still needs to be raised. The factory, which would be among the largest buildings in the world (at 500m by 500m), will be built on the site to the north of the Blyth estuary in the Wansbeck constituency.

Wansbeck MP Ian Lavery said: *'It has long been a goal of mine to reignite Wansbeck's industrial tradition, while hailing the developments within the renewable energy industry. This new plant is finally a sign that things are moving in the right direction. I am overjoyed that the Energy Central site in the Wansbeck constituency has been chosen as the site of the new gigaplant. This has the potential to change the lives of thousands of constituents in Wansbeck by providing quality, secure employment which has been in short supply in this region.'*

Prime Minister Boris Johnson visited the nearby Blyth Constituency, on the day of the announcement, and described the plans as *'fantastic news'*.

Support for Bishop's Primary School

Ashington Town Council has supported the Bishop's Primary School, at the James Knott Campus, with a grant of £2,760 to develop an environmentally friendly and imaginative outdoor classroom.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the school, like many others, had to adapt teaching methods dramatically over the past year. They are now looking to the future and teaching as safely as possible for the 220 children who attend the school. The school are creating an outdoor classroom and learning facility within the established garden. The facility will be used to support both curriculum and extra curriculum activities with the aim of creating a learning environment that will be interactive and inspire the students.

Ashington Town Council support will provide much needed outdoor storage and seating as well as teaching aids, tools & equipment and improvement works to a polytunnel.



In the photograph, above, is Cllr. Brian Gallacher (Haydon Ward) safely presenting a cheque to Mrs Caroline Mullen, Head of the Campus.

Mrs Mullen said *'We very much value the support of the Town Council in providing an interactive and stimulating classroom. The project will greatly assist learning both though the pandemic and beyond and will contribute to the mental wellbeing of the children'*.

Peoples Park Play Area To Re-Open



In September 2020 Ashington Town Council took the decision to close the Peoples Park Play Area facility following the siting of a Covid-19 Testing Station in the nearby car park.

At the time the Town Council was not consulted, involved or included in any assessment, risk or otherwise, of the selection of the location and opening of the Testing Station.

In making the decision at the time and acknowledging public concern, the Town Council recognised that some parents and most children would be disappointed but hoped that the reasoning behind the decision would be understood.

Given the deemed lower risk of Covid-19 transmission and the successful roll out of the vaccine programme the Town Council has now taken the decision to open the facility at the earliest opportunity. Sadly, despite the play area being closed, some vandalism has recently taken place to the play equipment. When this equipment is repaired we will open the play area, hopefully in time for the Easter weekend.

Ashington Town Council

Budget Information 2021/22



In January, the Town Council, like all other Town and Parish Council's in Northumberland considered and agreed its budget requirement for the forthcoming financial year 2021/22. Coming off the back of the most challenging and uncertain year we have all faced in living memory, the Town Council members were very mindful of the financial difficulties and uncertain times ahead that many residents will be facing when we emerge from the current pandemic.

2020 was unlike anything we have ever faced up to. Project plans, development schemes for the year and community and commemorative events that the Town Council oversee and fund, including Fayre Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Lighting switch-on and the Miners' Memorial Service were all initially postponed then cancelled altogether due to the pandemic.

Whilst disappointing, the event cancellations did however offer budget savings that were quickly earmarked for new pressing and emerging funding needs, some of which can be read about in this newsletter. The Town Council also continued with invaluable support to key organisations working in the town.

In addition, the Town Council established a Covid-19 Support Fund that was asked to also look at emerging needs that arose and other town-wide initiatives, including support for organisations during school holidays and Christmas Toy Appeals.

We were very fortunate that our own staff remained safe and well and were able to work on site in delivering our local services alongside key partners including Northumberland County Council Neighbourhood Services Teams and Communities Together. We are also encouraged lately to see the emergence of community groups wanting to take part and work with us in

clean-up campaigns and we are happy to support and fund that work when needed.

The Town Council has always retained a tight control on budget management and as you would be entitled to expect resolves each year to take all available steps to avoid the need for Council Tax increases. Wherever and whenever possible, we look to maximise external funding opportunities and look at 'invest to save' projects and options that will reduce ongoing costs. To date, we have been very successful in acquiring external funding that has led over the years to the development of major schemes such as the Ashington Memorial Garden and the People's Park Play Area.

You will in recent days have received your new Council Tax bills for 2021/22. I am hoping that you were pleased to note that Ashington Town Council had no increase in its own Council Tax charge. I am delighted that we were able to do that while also improving the service level. Rest assured that will remain the aim of the Town Council moving forward.

Cllr. Lynne Grimshaw - Chair of the Finance & General Services Committee

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Town Councillor



Central Ward
Cllr Tom Wilson
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County & Town Councillor



Central Ward
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Town Councillor



Central Ward
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Town Councillor



College Ward
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County & Town Councillor



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College Ward
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Haydon Ward
Cllr Brian Gallacher
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Haydon Ward
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Seaton Ward
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For more information on the work and services provided by Ashington Town Council visit

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