

**AGENDA 6, Enc i) ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL, AGREED Minutes of the Finance and General Services Committee held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025, at Ashington Town Hall, Council Chamber, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX**

**CLLRS PRESENT:**

Cllrs Lynne Grimshaw (Chair), Mark Purvis, Karl Green, Kerry Davison, David Coyle, Marjorie Chambers, Louis Brown, Glyn Davies, Scott Amery, Jim Lang, Bob Walkinshaw, Caroline Ball.

**ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE**

Sharon Parmley – Engagement and Events Officer and Gary Holmes – Administration and Communications Officer

Cllr Grimshaw addressed the meeting by stating “I would like to remind members about the expected standards of conduct in Council meetings. Members should raise their hand and speak through the Chair and may speak only once on any item on the agenda. Speaking once is limited to 5 minutes and will be enforced unless you are raising a point of order, giving a personal explanation, or exercising a right of reply. Once debate is closed, we will move to a vote on the item, with the mover having the right of reply before the vote is taken.”

**FGS2526/056 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR**

Welcome by Cllr Lynne Grimshaw.

It was **AGREED** to move the Northumberland Miners Picnic to the first item on the agenda.

**FGS2526/057 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Stephen Roberts, John Tully, and Paul Wright.

**FGS2526/058 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of interest.

**FGS2526/059 DISPENSATIONS**

No dispensations were requested.

**FGS2526/060 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present.

**FGS2526/062 NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS PICNIC (Jo Raw and Liz Ritson, North East Museums, in attendance)**

The Miner's Picnic has a rich history dating back 161 years to 1864 in Blyth. The event has taken place annually except during World War One, World War Two, and the strikes of 1921 and 1984. Woodhorn Museum has hosted the event since 1992, and it has been running in its current form since 2008. Woodhorn views the Miner's Picnic as an important annual community event and waives normal admission fees to ensure accessibility for all attendees.

The 2025 event attracted 1,493 attendees despite challenging weather conditions. Since 2018, Woodhorn has allocated £20,000 per year from their Arts Council England funding specifically for the picnic. The cost per attendee ranges from approximately £14.50 to £19, depending on total attendance numbers.

Analysis of visitor data revealed that 66.1% of attendees are local residents from within Northumberland. Word of mouth remains the primary driver for attendance, with 79% of visitors hearing about the event through personal recommendations and expressing willingness to

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return. In terms of visitor frequency, 24% of picnic attendees visit Woodhorn Museum 2-3 times per year, while 20% reported this as their first visit to the venue.

Online survey results demonstrated overwhelmingly positive feedback, with 97% of participants rating their experience as either good (13%) or excellent (84%). Musical performances were particularly well-received, with 93% of survey respondents highlighting them as a favourite element. Interestingly, 0% of respondents specifically mentioned family-friendly activities as a highlight.

Cllr Ball shared her personal experience of attending the event, noting that Mr Wilson's one-liners were exceptional and that attendees really embraced the spirit of the day. She described the event as "absolutely fantastic" and shared a touching anecdote about a young girl she knows who was inspired to learn a brass instrument after attending the picnic. Cllr Ball extended her thanks to Woodhorn and the team for organizing the event and creating such memorable experiences for the community.

Cllr Amery enquired about potential collaboration with the Narrow Gauge Railway. Jo responded that Woodhorn maintains an excellent relationship with the railway and that they were present at the picnic fundraising for their project. Once the Narrow Gauge Railway is fully operational, there are plans to explore collaborative opportunities.

Cllr Davies raised concerns about the museum's governance transition from local to regional control and how this might impact Woodhorn's operations. Jo reassured the committee that Keith, the current director of North East Museums, previously served as Director of Woodhorn for eight years and that she believes the museum is in safe hands.

Cllr Grimshaw asked about the sustainability of the Miner's Picnic funding, particularly regarding the £20,000 earmarked allocation. Jo explained that there is one more year remaining in the current Arts Council budget cycle. Looking ahead, they will need to explore alternative funding sources while maintaining the event's free admission for the community. Securing funding for the picnic will be a priority over the next 12 months.

It was **AGREED** to release the funding set aside to support this event.

**FGS2526/061 DRAFT MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the last Finance and General Services Meeting held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September were **RECEIVED** and **AGREED**.

**FGS2526/063 CLERK AND OFFICER UPDATES**

This report provides an update on key activities and developments since the last Finance and General Services meeting held in September 2025.

***Neighbourhood Services***

***Memorial Garden***

Mark has done a great job on the refurbishment of the seats, respecting the wishes of Ashington Branch of RBL to retain as long as possible. Works by Brambledown on paving and planting to east is complete. The beds on the entrance side need significant work so this has been put off until after Remembrance.

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**Doves Corner**

Whilst this remains an asset of NCC, I have emailed ward Cllrs Ward Cllrs to establish if they would now prefer this asset to be maintained in-house as opposed to being maintained by NCC. This would give ATC full control over the appearance, and rather than inspecting the works carried out by another, we would be fully responsible. **I await a response from all Cllrs.**

**Town Council Assets**

I would like to take the opportunity to repeat the information shared on ATC Assets. Work is ongoing to list everything in advance of potential movement to an asset management database.

Town Seats are identified as the next priority and all Cllrs have been contacted to ask if there are any seats in their wards that they would prefer were replaced with the new style seating which is made with recycled materials and no maintenance, as well as being more accessible with arm rests. Thoughts being that if seats are identified for replacement rather than refurbishment we could seek funding via MLIS or Windfarm. **A reminder to Ward Cllrs to get in touch.**

**Horticulture**

Station Road beds have been cut right back and shaped with a good quality mulch added. Following the spring arrivals which pop up Ryan will identify gaps and we expect some new planting.

Work has started on the Woodhorn Road/Woodhorn Villas entrance feature which has always been more difficult to maintain. Mark and Ryan are building up the border in brickwork to match the gateway structure and this will be planted with plants that will thrive.

All planters and towers have been emptied and replanted with winter pansies and hyacinths. Following our move to managing this in-house costs were sourced for the plants needed and we saved substantially on previous years. Plants were purchased from Heighley Gate Garden Centre, where we now have an account.

**Allotments**

An Allotment Liaison meeting is scheduled for Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October with the opportunity for site representatives to bring forward capital projects across all allotment sites. This includes those managed by ATC and those that are self-managed.

An assessment framework has been developed to provide a transparent, fair way to evaluate capital work's needs. All capital projects put forward by sites will be assessed using the framework to prioritise schemes in order of need. Officers assess, and then Full Council will decide the total capital budget available for capital allotment works.

The assessment will reveal an order of priority - highest scores represent the most urgent needs. Whether the top 2, top 3, or more schemes can be funded depends entirely on the budget allocation decided by Full Council.

This framework ensures that the recommendations presented to Full Council can be clearly explained and justified, recognising that all sites have genuine needs but available resources must be allocated where they deliver the greatest benefit and address the most pressing requirements. The framework includes H&S, Impact & Benefit, Condition & Urgency, Value for

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Money, External Funding available, Waiting time & Equity. The document has been shared with all concerned alongside a request for needs.

**Play Areas**

ROPSA are visiting on 31<sup>st</sup> October to inspect all out play areas. This annual inspection is a legal requirement.

**North Seaton Colliery Play Area**

The consultation for the redevelopment of NS Colliery Play Area is complete. Tree works have been carried out, and the entrance is scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> November. Sarah is meeting with Paul from Kompan next week and then final suggested schemes will be shared with ward Cllrs.

Formal approval for the scheme, spending and funding application was delegated to the EO in consultation with ward Cllrs, therefore this will be progressed without delay.

**Bywell Road Play Area**

Following previous update about this NCC owned and maintained play area, we expect the survey to be sent out by NCC to establish use and value.

**Events and Engagement**

**Hirst Working Group Meeting**

Summary of action points from the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025.

**Community Safety and Tensions** Two protests have occurred, prompting the establishment of a joint engagement group (JEG) between police and community representatives. Two meetings have been held so far with plans to expand participation. The current tension assessment remains unchanged, with concerns focused on community fears about unknown elements and new neighbours.

**Hate Crime Awareness** A week of action is planned during national hate crime week. While the national focus is on disability hate crime, local efforts will cover all hate crime types through drop-in sessions with police and local partners. The group emphasised encouraging reporting of incidents and crimes, noting that third-party reporting is available - victims don't need to report themselves.

**Community Cohesion Initiatives** A cohesion group has been established with weekly local meetings and monthly strategic sessions. The focus is on "bringing the town back together" through events, activities, and projects that foster neighbourliness and connections. These initiatives will link with the resident forum and master plan work.

**Funding Opportunity:** The Common Ground Award offers capital grants up to £10,000 for VCSE organisations working on community cohesion. Applications open 13 October and close 21 November 2025, with funding decisions in January 2026.

**Youth Engagement**

- New futsal sessions started on Wednesday evenings at Hirst Park Play Zone
- Playzone usage has increased with activity programmes to be shared

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- Youth Providers Meeting hosted by town council (next date: 20<sup>th</sup> October)
- Discussion ongoing about multi-activity days for children during summer holidays
- Kings Trust volunteering opportunities available for young people (up to two weeks of work experience)

**Housing and Environmental Improvements**

Increased focus on private sector housing and empty properties, with letters being sent to properties with concerns about vacancy or untidy gardens. A pilot area drop-in session was held from Laburnum to Chestnut Street, with additional sessions on 7th October. The area is moving forward with a funding bid for full architectural street design, with Community Protection Notices and Warnings to be served imminently.

**Other Activities**

- Business week of action: 13th November
- Window space available at NCVA for community engagement
- Successful partnerships established with Full Circle Food Project, Willowvale, and Newbiggin Boxing Club for cooking classes and healthy living programmes

**Action Items**

- Wayne: Share resources, event information, and motorbike disorder leaflet
- Carla: Share all reporting methods and discuss multi-activity days with youth providers meeting; link with Rob Strettle on town designs
- Group members: Encourage reporting of incidents and share any facility use ideas with Keir

***Staff Training: Managing Grant Applications and Source Funding***

A comprehensive funding training session was recently attended, by the Engagement and Events Officer, providing valuable information and guidance on a wide range of funding opportunities.

The training covered National Lottery funding streams including Awards for All (up to £20,000), Partnerships (over £10,000), and the Bringing People Together Fund, alongside other lottery distributors such as Sports England, Heritage Fund, and Arts Council England.

Additional funding sources explored included;

- Landfill Community Funds through ENTRUST
- Derbyshire Environmental Trust (TARMAC)
- Funding Your Community, the DEFRA-ACRE Grant Scheme
- Supermarket funds
- Biodiversity funds, and the Environment Agency.

The session also highlighted alternative fundraising methods including social investment, events, donations, in-kind contributions, and charity banks, as well as smaller community funds such as AVIVA Community Fund, Screwfix Foundation, and Coop Local Community Fund.

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Key guidance was provided on funding criteria including compatibility, eligibility, and filter processes, with emphasis on summarising research sources, utilising the right people, being fully prepared with evidence of need, reading criteria thoroughly, being adaptable and ambitious, and building a convincing case.

The training provided a helpful insight into funding opportunities and will enable Sharon to signpost community groups and organisations to relevant funds, as well as enable Ashington Town Council to apply for funding for upcoming projects.

***NCVA Funding Fair 22nd September 2025***

Ashington Town Council was invited to participate in the NCVA Northumberland Funding Fair held on 22nd September at the Hirst Welfare Centre. The event proved to be a tremendous success, with sixty-eight appointments taking place in just three hours. The fair welcomed dozens of community organisations from right across Northumberland, with groups attending from as far north as Belford and Ingram, to Prudhoe and Hexham in the west, and everywhere in between.

Regional and national funders generously gave their time to provide advice, guidance, and encouragement to attendees, with demand far exceeding expectations. The event facilitated numerous positive connections between funders and community organisations seeking financial support. Ashington Town Council had a great day supporting community groups and organisations looking for funding opportunities and benefiting from the wealth of expertise on offer.

NCVA has indicated they will take a short break before turning their thoughts to plans for 2026 and another location. In the meantime, organisations requiring funding or governance advice are encouraged to contact NCVA directly. A big thank you to Northumberland Community & Voluntary Action for inviting Ashington Town Council to this valuable event.

***Ashington Town Council Awarded Funding for Festive Events***

Ashington Town Council were successful in securing funding from the **Animating Ashington Autumn/Winter Festival Fund**, part of Northumberland County Council's support for local cultural events.

The funding will deliver two exciting community celebrations this November:

- **Ashington's Christmas Light Switch-On and Lantern Parade** – taking place on **Thursday 13th November 2025**, featuring free family activities, live entertainment, and a magical Fairies and Elves themed lantern parade.
- **Ashington Christmas Craft Market with Festive Magic and Free Family Fun** – on **Friday 14th November 2025**, transforming Station Road into a festive marketplace inspired by *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, with unique craft stalls, free children's activities, and charity fundraising in support of the Wansbeck Valley Foodbank.

This investment demonstrates the shared commitment of **Ashington Town Council** and **Northumberland County Council** to creating inclusive, memorable community events that bring residents together to celebrate the season.

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**Website and Social Media PR**

**Website**

The following items appeared on our website news page since the previous officer's report. Members are reminded that we maintain active Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn pages to promote Council activities and engage with our community. You can read them in full by visiting the website.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/>

<a href="#"><u>Casual Vacancy - Hirst Ward</u></a>	14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
<a href="#"><u>Ashington Christmas Craft Market with Festive Magic and Free Family Fun</u></a>	13 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
<a href="#"><u>Ashington Christmas Craft Market with Festive Magic and Free Family Fun</u></a>	13 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
<a href="#"><u>Ashington Town Council Launches Second Round of Small Grant Fund</u></a>	08 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
<a href="#"><u>Standing Together: Ashington's Response to Recent Division</u></a>	06 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
<a href="#"><u>Ashington Town Council Celebrates ESCAPE Family Support's Success in National Awards</u></a>	29 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Casual Vacancy - Hirst Ward</u></a>	29 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Ashington Town Council Announces Exciting October Half Term Activities for Families</u></a>	26 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Ashington to Honour Fallen Heroes with Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service</u></a>	26 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Important Update: New Process for Ordering Poppy Wreaths</u></a>	26 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Conclusion of the external year-end audit, year ending March 2025</u></a>	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Community Celebrates the Opening of the Centenary Orchard at Wansbeck Road Allotments</u></a>	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2025

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<a href="#"><u>Full Council Meeting on 30th September 2025</u></a>	22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Election of a Town Councillor for Ashington (Hirst Ward) on Thursday 16 October 2025</u></a>	19 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Have Your Say – Help Shape the Future of Northumberland</u></a>	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Ashington Town Council Celebrates Community Spirit with £82,521 Investment in Local Groups</u></a>	15 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Ashington Pride Family Picnic 2025</u></a>	15 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Wansbeck Wanderers Walking Football Club Awarded £500 Grant</u></a>	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Town Councillor Election Called for Ashington (Hirst Ward)</u></a>	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Wansbeck Community Links Awarded £500 Grant</u></a>	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Ashington Community Litter Project Receives Essential Equipment from SUEZ</u></a>	8 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>UPDATE: Information from Northumberland County Council regarding Former Quay Furniture Building on Ashington High Street</u></a>	5 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Ashington Town Council - Casual Vacancy – Hirst Ward</u></a>	3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Ashington Youth Groups Unite for Stronger Community Impact</u></a>	2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>New era for skills: North East colleges form transformational alliance to power regional growth</u></a>	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2025
<a href="#"><u>Finance &amp; General Services Committee Meeting on 09/09/25.</u></a>	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2025

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**Facebook**

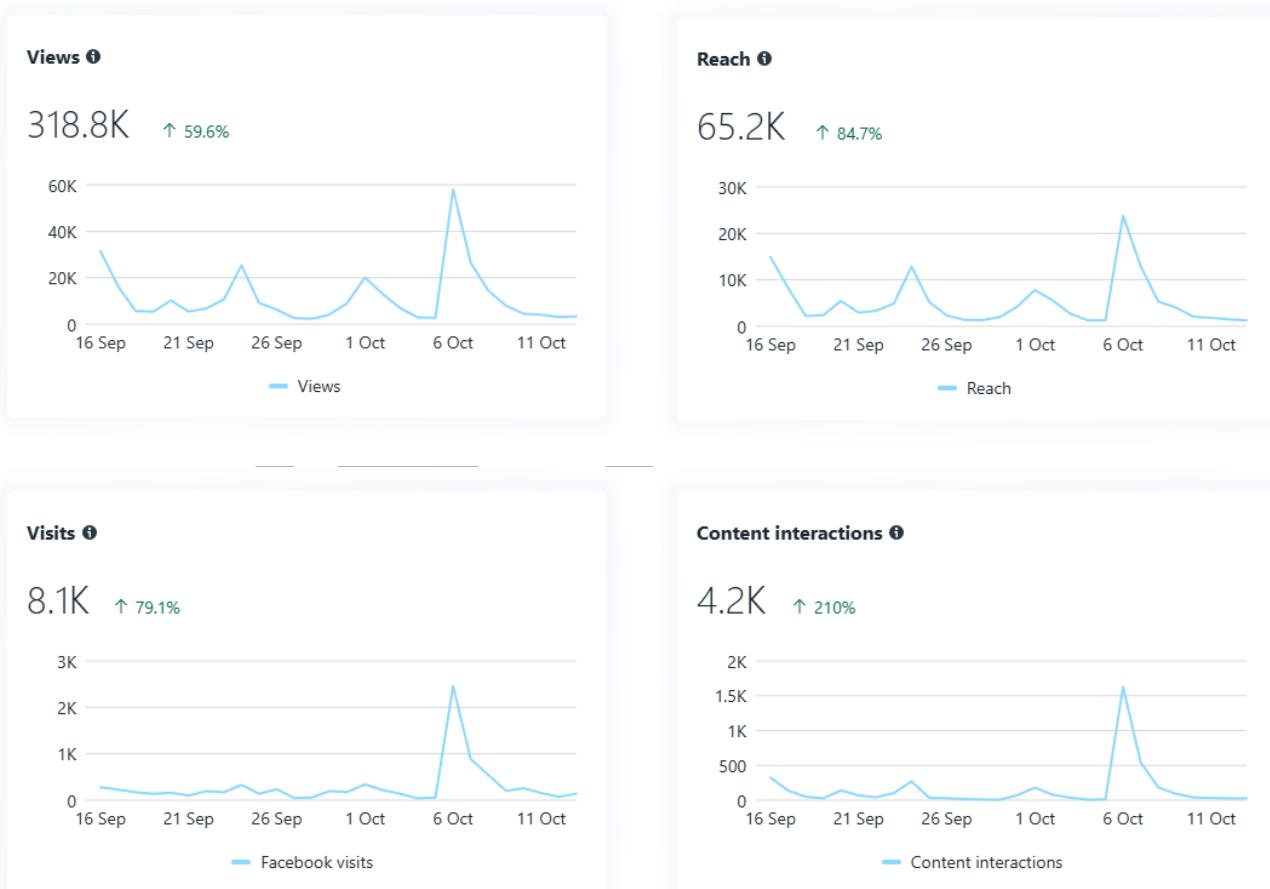
Our Facebook page has demonstrated positive performance since the last Finance & General Services Committee meeting on 9th September 2025. The reporting period (16th September - 14th October 2025) shows growth across key metrics including views, reach, and engagement, with particularly strong performance in link clicks and new followers.

Since the last meeting we had 3,300 followers and this has increased yet again by 100 reaching 3,500 followers.

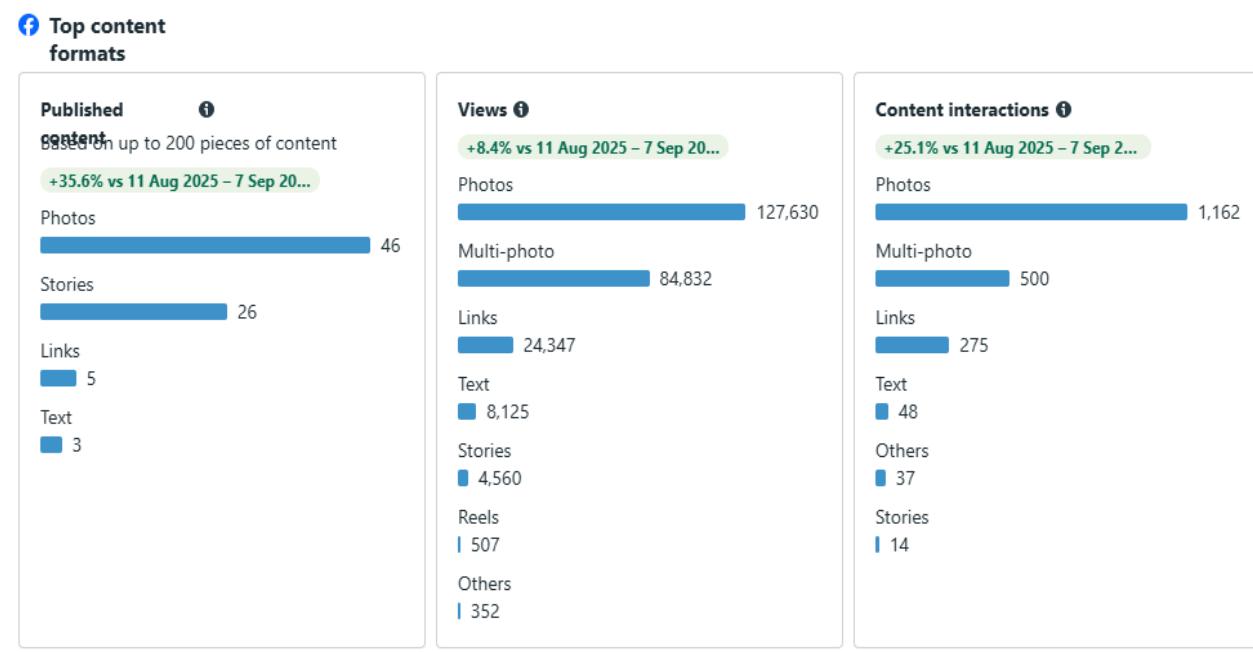
Positive posts and posts concerning Ashington in general are still showing very strong community engagement, rather than shares that we post on behalf of other organisations, with a continued effort to share posts where applicable and possible.

Efforts are still ongoing on how to optimise Facebook to ensure the biggest reach and engagement possible while we still discuss the use of advertising to boost posts, if needed. Thanks to some research and backend Facebook work, scheduling of posts has now been reduced from hours or work, to minutes. Scheduling posts in advance could have taken an hour or two to schedule a full week's worth of posts, whereas now I can schedule a hundred posts within 2 minutes.

A comprehensive report can now also be generated that offers insights such as what works best, what time of day, what day of the week gets more engagement, etc, to maximise Ashington Town Council's reach within the community.



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**Top Ten Posts:**

Title	Date published	Reach	Likes and reactions	Shares	Interactions	Comments
 We, together with community leaders and local gro... <span>Boost</span>	6 October 11:02	40.2K	575	132	1.1K	391
 Huge Congratulations to Nicola Hansom Beaut... <span>Boost</span>	24 September 14:42	17.8K	97	12	139	29
 AMAZING NEWS! We've just awarded £82,521 to 2... <span>Boost</span>	16 September 20:29	16.2K	149	25	198	24
 <a href="https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/n...">https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/n...</a> <span>Boost</span>	19 September 18:44	9.4K	15	18	53	19
 Ashington Christmas Light Switch-On & Lan... <span>Boost</span>	1 October 16:14	8.7K	48	40	127	33
 The Full Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 30... <span>Boost</span>	22 September 16:58	6K	10	7	18	1
 MORE ILLEGAL DUMPING IN ASHINGTON ... <span>Boost</span>	2 October 16:12	5.3K	21	5	38	12
 Community Centenary Orchard Officially Op... <span>Boost</span>	23 September 15:27	5.1K	72	9	88	5
 5 weeks and counting...Christmas Lights Update ... <span>Boost</span>	8 October 14:03	4.5K	23	7	45	15
 Halloween Trail this Half Term! 🎃 🎃 From ... <span>Boost</span>	30 September 15:30	3.6K	16	9	30	2

**FGS2526/064 CASUAL VACANCY – HIRST WARD**

To formally note that a casual vacancy in the office of Councillor was formally **DECLARED** following the resignation of Cllr Pauline Thompson.

Members **NOTED** that the formal Notice of Vacancy was published on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

**FGS2526/065 BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE 2025/26**

**a) Updated Budget Report**

The updated budget and expenditure report was **RECEIVED** and there were **NO** questions to the received.

**b) Accounts Paid and to be Paid**

The schedule of accounts paid was **RECEIVED** and those accounts paid since the last meeting was **ENDORSED** and there were **NO** questions received.

**c) Bank Reconciliation**

The bank reconciliation dated 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025 was **RECEIVED**

Cllr Brown raised a query regarding Youth and Support funding, noting that £20,000 had been given to Project Shield and questioning whether the stated amount was incorrect. Cllr Grimshaw clarified that the payment had not yet been processed, confirming that the figure shown was correct.

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Cllr Brown highlighted that election expenses would increase due to three vacancies in the Hirst ward, should by-elections be called.

**FGS2526/066 NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27 TO 2028/29**

Cllr Ball outlined two significant issues that had been raised in Cllr Grimshaw's ward. The first involved a crossing where the road infrastructure was insufficient, resulting in a child being knocked over. The second concerned a visually impaired gentleman living on Newbiggin Road, who currently must walk a mile to reach a safe crossing point.

Cllr Chambers recalled that when the housing development was originally presented to the council, assurances were given that a pelican crossing would be installed. Cllr Purvis added that the construction company responsible for building the houses had not yet completed the road infrastructure.

Cllr Amery highlighted concerns at 25 Morpeth Road near KFC, noting issues for visually impaired pedestrians. He also raised concerns about the T junction on Morpeth Road leading to Ellington Terrace, where approximately 1,000 vehicles would be attempting to access the junction, suggesting that traffic lights were needed.

Cllr Ball confirmed that the first two locations would meet the LTP assessment criteria. She also raised concerns about the new Greggs drive-through next to McDonald's, stating that the road would be dangerous and restrictions would be needed along that stretch.

Cllr Coyle identified an issue on the cycle path between North Seaton Road and Newbiggin Road, where cyclists have been observed traveling at high speed towards the road. He noted that the corner is blind, and suggested measures were needed to slow cyclists down at this location.

Following discussion, **it was AGREED** to focus on one area of concern for each ward. The three agreed priorities for submission were identified as Newbiggin Road in Central Ward, Rotary Way next to McDonald's, and the island next to KFC.

**Priority 1: Pedestrian Crossing Safety - Island next to KFC, Morpeth Road** This priority addresses pedestrian safety concerns at the island near KFC on Morpeth Road, with particular focus on the needs of visually impaired residents. The issue meets multiple LTP assessment criteria including improving network safety and security (criterion e), overcoming inequality by providing safe crossing facilities for vulnerable road users including visually impaired pedestrians (criterion a), improving public health by enabling safer pedestrian access (criterion c), and encouraging sustainable travel choices by making walking safer and more accessible (criterion d). This is a clear community priority (criterion g) that requires a capital improvement to the existing crossing infrastructure. The scheme is realistic within funding limits as it involves improvements to an existing crossing point rather than a major new installation.

**Priority 2: Pelican Crossing - Newbiggin Road to Essenden Rise, Central Ward** This priority addresses the absence of a safe crossing facility on Newbiggin Road serving the residential development between Newbiggin Road and Essenden Rise. The issue arose from a housing development where a pelican crossing was promised but not delivered, leaving

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residents, including a visually impaired gentleman from Newbiggin Road, having to walk a mile to reach a safe crossing point. A child has already been knocked over due to insufficient crossing provision. This priority meets multiple LTP criteria including: improving network safety and security following a recorded pedestrian injury (criterion e), overcoming inequality by providing essential infrastructure for visually impaired and vulnerable residents (criterion a), improving public health by enabling safe pedestrian movement (criterion c), encouraging sustainable travel choices by making walking safer (criterion d), and representing a clear community priority with demonstrable need (criterion g). The scheme is eligible for LTP capital funding as a pedestrian crossing facility and is realistic in scale for the available budget.

**Priority 3: Traffic Management and Parking Restrictions - Lintonville Parkway/Rotary Way, Greggs Drive-Through** This priority addresses roadway safety and parking concerns at Lintonville Parkway near the new Greggs drive-through next to McDonald's on Rotary Way. The development has created dangerous conditions requiring traffic management interventions and parking restrictions along the road. This priority meets LTP assessment criteria including: improving network safety and security through traffic management measures (criterion e), supporting the economy by managing traffic flow around new commercial developments (criterion a), and representing a clear community priority identified by multiple councillors (criterion g). The scheme is eligible for LTP capital funding as it involves traffic management measures and parking restrictions and is realistic within funding parameters as it requires signage, road markings, and restriction orders rather than major infrastructure works.

Cllr Davies asked whether the Council could reject planning applications they disagreed with to challenge decisions more effectively. Cllr Green shared his frustration in attempting to persuade Northumberland County Council to adopt roads, noting that NCC currently shows little interest as adopting roads requires financial commitment. He suggested that keeping roads unadopted allows builders to remain satisfied while avoiding maintenance costs.

Cllr Amery stated that Northumberland County Council is equally culpable as the builders in this matter, noting their lack of interest in addressing issues. He shared his experience of approaching Planning Enforcement and NCC to repair streetlights, only to be met with disinterest.

Cllr Ball suggested that when commenting on planning applications, the Council should stipulate additional requirements as part of agreements, such as requiring specific infrastructure (for example, street lighting) to be installed within a certain number of houses being built.

Cllr Lang proposed that it was time to establish a planning committee capable of responding to applications professionally and submitting comprehensive reports to Northumberland County Council.

It was **AGREED** to submit these three priorities to Northumberland County Council for consideration in the 2026/27 Local Transport Plan Capital Programme.

**FGS2526/067 DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025, 6:00pm, Council Chamber.

The meeting ended at 19:07