

**Ashington Town Council**  
**Draft Minutes of the Climate Change & Environment Committee Meeting held at**  
**6:00pm on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023, at Ashington Hirst Welfare**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:**

Cllr Sophie Robinson (Chair), Caroline Ball, Michelle Brannigan, Louis Brown, Marjorie Chambers, Glyn Davies, Jim Lang and Pauline Thompson.

**ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE:**

Sarah Eden – Clerk/RFO, Stephen Humphrey – ATC Assets and Facilities Manager, Sharon Parmley – Administration (minute taking)  
 Rebecca Vickers, Community Project Manager, Groundwork Northeast  
 Kirsten Johnson, Woodlands Officer

**CCE23/028 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Vicky Brown, Matthew Cuthbert, Lynne Grimshaw, Mark Purvis, and Liam Lavery.

**CCE23/029 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of interests from Councillors.

**CCE23/030 DISPENSATIONS**

There were no requests for dispensations from Councillors.

**CCE23/031 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public.

**CCE23/032 MINUTES OF CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** and sign as a true record, the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

**CCE23/033 CLERK AND OFFICER UPDATES**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** an update on items actioned since the previous meeting, sent out in advance of this meeting.

**TOUR OF WEST SLEEKBURN**

Cllr Caroline Ball, Cllr Michelle Brannigan, Cllr Marjorie Chambers, and Cllr Pauline Thompson, along with the Clerk, are attending the tour of West Sleekburn Recycling Plant on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 2pm. The visit was restricted to five as there is a waiting list, if there are others who wish to go, this can be arranged in the future.

The Clerk informed members that unfortunately the visit has been cancelled. The Clerk will inform Councillors of the new date when it is received.

**TREE PLANTING SCHEMES**

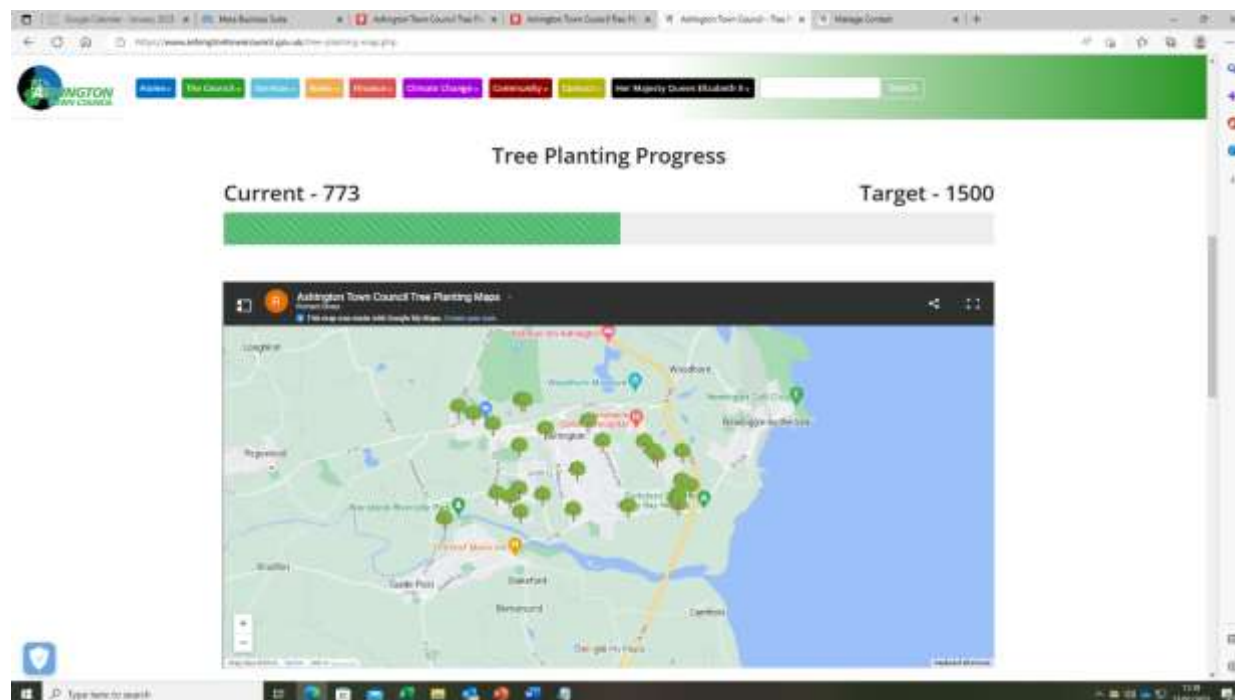
As agreed at the Climate Change Committee in October, Brambledown has planted 73 semi mature trees at 5 locations: Woodhorn roundabout, A196 Wansbeck Riverside, Alexandra Road, Paddock Wood area and South Side in North Seaton. 12-month watering and maintenance will be carried out by Brambledown.

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A further 13 semi mature trees will be planted at the end of February by local contractor GS Wright Tree Surgeons at Woodhorn Villas and A197 Pegswood; watering and maintenance will be carried out by our own Neighbourhood Services Officers.

### **TREE PLANTING TARGETS ON WEBSITE**

We are just over halfway to achieving the tree planting target for 2023, with the potential of another 85 trees with upcoming agreed projects.



Article that will appear the Clerks and Councils Magazine next month (March)

*Ashington Town Council Climate Change Committee has set a target of 1,500 trees to be planted in 2022/23 and they are asking residents, schools, community groups and local businesses to help them achieve it!*

*Areas of the town where tree planting has already taken place have been added to a new interactive map, where it is hoped that residents will be able to witness Ashington becoming greener over 2023 and onwards. Another five tree planting schemes will be completed this month, weather permitting. These schemes will see another 73 trees planted, including Beech, Horse Chestnut, Lime, Norwegian Maple, Oak, Sycamore, Red Robin, and Wild Cherry.*

*Working with the local authority, Northumberland County Council, residents of Ashington taking part in the 'Free Tree Scheme' have been able to add their trees to the map. Residents can register their tree planting by completing a form on our dedicated tree planting page; [Ashington Town Council - Tree Planting Map](#)*

*Climate Change Committee Chair Cllr Sophie Robinson, comments:*

*"We recognise that any council working alone can achieve little in facing climate change. It is important however that we make clear our intent to work positively with others, organisations,*

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*and individuals, towards schemes and solutions in our town that are significant in addressing carbon neutrality and eliminating emissions. Everyone has a role and part to play however small; and by engaging the community with this online tool to record tree planting, shows the councils intent on engagement and real community involvement particularly in relation to matters that impact on us all”.*

**CCE23/034 GROUNDWORK NORTHEAST**

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** a verbal report from Rebecca Vickers, Community Project Manager for Groundwork Northeast.

Rebecca gave the following updates on the current projects on the Wansbeck Estuary.

***Wansbeck Estuary***

Prevention of saltmarsh erosion and restoration of this priority habitat

- 0.705 ha intertidal saltmarsh enhanced
- 439,000 m<sup>2</sup> estuary edge riparian corridor improvements
- Installation of brushwood fascine to slow the flow and allow sediment to build up. This creates mudflat which is then colonised by saltmarsh plants
- MMO licence received – due for installation late March, early April

***Wansbeck Barrage***

- Using WEIF funding to work with EA and NCC to investigate options to improve biodiversity and water quality behind the barrage
- Modelling by Hull University
- This winter, trial opening repeated so more data available to prove/disprove models
- JBA consultants engaged to take forward more specialist modelling and provide list of options
- Working with river user groups and councils to develop ongoing management plan for lake area including removal of debris (trees) from area behind barrage
- Also providing technical advice and tender documents for new Rowing Club pontoon funded through Section 106 and Ashington Leisure Partnership monies

***Pontoon***

A new pontoon is to be installed to provide better accessibility to the river. Work ongoing with Cambois Rowing Club.

The Chair thanked Rebecca for her presentation and asked how Ashington Town Council could be involved moving forward with the projects.

Rebecca invited members of the council to attend the next Barrage Stakeholder Group meeting on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

It was **PROPOSED** that Cllr Louis Brown and the Assets and Facilities Manager, Stephen Humphrey both attend the meeting on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The proposal was **AGREED**.

Rebecca left the meeting at 6.45pm.

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**CCE23/035 THE GREAT NORTHUMBERLAND FOREST**

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** a presentation from Kirsten Johnson, Woodlands Officer, regarding the Defra-funded Woodland Creation Partnership, hosted by NCC.

The Great Northumberland Forest is a plan to plant millions of trees, creating more wooded landscapes across the county by 2030. This will help tackle the big challenges facing society, such as climate change, biodiversity decline, promoting health and wellbeing, and supporting a thriving local economy.

Kirsten's team of Woodland Officers can help with advice, where to find more information and how to access funding. The free support includes discussing and assessing options and opportunities, and how they fit with your objects.

There are several funding options available to support tree and wood planting and the Woodland Officers can help find the best funding opportunities to suit your needs.

***Local Authorities Tree Scape Fund***

The Local Authority Treescapes Fund (sometimes called LATF) is about to start its 3rd year of funding. The fund is open all year, and has a minimum application of £50,000, which can include several projects.

Year 1 was 2021-22. We had plans to plant trees in about 16 different locations, a total of 336 standard trees and 2,500 whips. But then storm Arwen meant that effort was put into the clean-up, and we were allowed to carry forward 14 of the sites to year 2.

[Northumberland County Council - Great Northumberland Forest](#)

***Urban Challenge Fund***

The fund provides 80% of published standard costs for the planting and establishment of trees in urban and peri-urban areas. In 2023 payments for trial pits have been introduced to check for the presence of services. The remaining costs of planting and establishing trees supported under the UTCF must be met through match funding, either in the form of money or labour. Agreement holders can complete tree planting over two planting seasons: winter 2023/2024 and winter 2024/25. However, applications received before 30 June 2023 must have at least 50% of tree planting scheduled in 2023/24. There is a minimum application value of £10,000.

[Urban Tree Challenge Fund - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

***Corporate sponsors***

Donations received from sponsors is used to pay for tree planting projects, these projects normally involve planting whips rather than standards.

***England Woodland Creation Offer***

Landowners, land managers and public bodies can apply to the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) for support to create new woodland, including through natural colonisation, on areas as small as one hectare. You could receive up to £13,000 per hectare to support your woodland creation scheme.

[England Woodland Creation Offer - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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**DEFRA**

The Defra Planting and Planning fund comes from Defra's Nature for Climate pot. The Great Northumberland Forest was granted £1.6 million to increase wooded cover in the county, whether that's hedgerows, individual trees, shelterbelts or new blocks of woodland. The fund covers all the capital costs of planting (so tree stock, tree protection, labour for planting and creating protection like fences where there is a proven need) but it doesn't offer any maintenance payments once the trees are planted.

Kirsten had a selection of whips, tree guards and stakes to give Councillors an idea of the size of the whips and the use of sturdier stakes. They are also trying out a new cardboard tree guard as opposed to the usual plastic guards.

Cllr Brannigan enquired if there was any value in carrying out a tree assessment of Ashington.

A small number of Town and Parish Councils have carried out tree assessment and have found them really useful and very beneficial to future tree planting. They can prove a need for certain projects to take place. One example is Prudhoe Town Council who carried out a tree assessment.

Kirsten highlighted the use of the prototype of cardboard tree guard, Cllr Ball suggested a Dragon's Den type of event involving the schools and colleges to put forward ideas for environmental friendly tree guards.

Kirsten leaves the meeting at 7.35pm.

**CCE23/036 PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL, CARBON LITERACY COURSE**

**It was AGREED** that the following Councillors would attend the Carbon Literacy Course,

Cllr Michelle Brannigan, Cllr Caroline Ball, Cllr Louis Brown, Cllr Sophie Robinson, Cllr Pauline Thompson

**It was FURTHER AGREED** that the Clerk at Newbiggin Town Council would be contacted if there were any places not filled, and other neighbouring Councils.

**CCE23/037 KEEP BRITAIN TIDY/GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN CAMPAIGN: 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH – 2<sup>ND</sup> APRIL**

**It was AGREED** to host/support litter picking events as part of the 2023 campaign.

**It was FURTHER AGREED** to hold litter picks on the following dates;

1. **Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March**, 10am – 11.30am, People's Park
2. **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**, 10am – 11.30am, Wansbeck Riverside
3. **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**, 2pm – 2.30pm, North Seaton Colliery
4. **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March**, 10am to 11.30am, Paddock Wood
5. **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March**, 10am to 11.30am, Hirst Park

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**CCE23/038 GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK: 10<sup>TH</sup> - 18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2023****a) Great Big Green Week Actions**

It was **AGREED** to delegate actions for the Great Big Green Week to the Communications and Engagement Officer, in consultation with the Events Group. Investigating those suggestions of a stall at the Tuesday market, Eco Fair and Dragon's Den type of event. It was also discussed that 'giveaways' were not in keeping with Climate Action so should not be included this year.

**b) Budget**

It was **AGREED** to allocate a budget of £5,000.

**CCE23/039 DATE, TIME, AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.

**Meeting ends 7.50pm**

DRAFT