

River Wansbeck Estuary & Barrage Project

Since 2020 Groundwork have been working on a feasibility assessment of the barrage, funded by Environment Agency Water Environment Improvement Fund which aims to address waterbody failures and water quality improvements. The project has been looking at various options for improvement including the feasibility of replacing the lock gates and have costed options for this. The aim is to find a balance between improving the ecology and allowing river use to continue. There have been trialled opening the gates in 22/22 and 22/23 to learn if silt was removed from the area upstream of the barrage - hydraulic models have been developed to show various scenarios and how they would affect/improve the ecology.

Groundwork is continuing to work with Northumberland County Council to find a way to still allow for river use alongside a more natural tidal regime. The next steps are to find the preferred option and how to fund it.

Defra funded tree planting projects across Ashington

Tree planting schemes in the Haydon ward will take place in coming weeks.

As agreed, a joint letter was sent from Ashington TC and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea TC with reference to NCC Highways objection to the suggested planting scheme on the roundabout.

The Highways Improvement Team Senior Officer has supported the objection as it is considered an accident hot spot, and they would not want to introduce anything that would affect visibility.

The response has been shared with Newbiggin-by-the-Sea TC along with the suggestion that there are alternative locations where tree planting might be more appropriate in Newbiggin, i.e. Central Parkway which could also prevent vehicles from driving over the grass. Presently, there is a live petition to install traffic lights on the roundabout.

Additionally, the tree planting scheme in Seaton ward, funded by ATC, will also take place w/c26 February, carried out by our contractors; Brambledown Landscapes Ltd.

Wildflower planting and bulb planting

Work to plant bulbs at nine locations across the town, as agreed at the CC&E committee in September, was carried out in November by WL Straughan. The sites chosen were:

A197 - Pegswood entrance, grassed area close to Holy Sepulchre Church, grassed area on Station Road, Featherwood Drive, Woodhorn Road / close to Wansbeck General Hospital, North Season Industrial Estate, Black Close Bank and Briardene. The planting should be coming through in coming days.

Additionally, wildflower planting schemes will take place in the spring at River Wansbeck, Paddock Wood, and Peoples Park in the spring with work again carried out by WL Straughan.

The Great British Spring Clean

The Spring Clean poster is out with dates for upcoming litter picks;

1. Hirst Area - Tuesday 26th March, from 10am - to meet at the Heart of the Hirst Building, 82 Beatrice Street, Ashington, NE63 9BP.
2. Peoples Park - Wednesday 27th March, from 10am - to meet at the main car park, Institute Road, Ashington, NE63 8HP.

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3. Wansbeck Riverside - Thursday 28 March, from 10am - to meet at North Seaton Colliery Community Centre, Links View, NE63 0XQ.
4. Paddock Wood - Saturday 30th March, from 10.30am to 12.00noon & 12.30pm to 2.00pm to meet at North Seaton Community Centre, Manley View, Ashington, NE63 9TF.

The details are available on the website, as linked below:

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/ashington-event/2024-03-26-ashingtons-great-british-spring-clean-hirst-area>

As well as the launch article that went out a couple of weeks ago.

<https://www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/news/news.php?s=2024-01-24-join-ashingtons-great-british-spring-clean-2024>

Climate Change Initiative – School Poster Competition

As part of ATC's commitment to reducing the effect of climate change. In advance of Earth Day (21st April), we will hold a poster competition for local primary schools, launching on April 19th. The designs will be asked to focus on educating and encouraging emission reduction activities like turning off lights, shorter showers, and walking more.

Selected poster designs will be printed and displayed around town - including bus shelters and litter bins - to inspire climate action in the broader community. The finished designs will be in place to support The Great Big Green Week in June.