AGENDA 5, Enc ii) OFFICERS UPDATE – 10th NOVEMBER 2026

Governance, Finance and Transparency

CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund (PSDF)

Following Full Council's agreement on 28th July, the Council's Public Sector Deposit Fund (PSDF) account was formally opened on 30th September 2026. In the period between, the necessary documentation was shared and checked to confirm the Council's decision, and the Cllr signatories on the Council's bank account were named and approved both the fund and the transfer, in line with the Council's Investment Strategy and Treasury Management Policy.

The investment is already delivering a return for the town. Since opening, the Council has received interest payments of £64.82 on 2nd October, covering the first two days, and £1,999.99 on 3rd November, a total of £2,064.81 to date. Interest is currently paid into the Council's expenditure account, but this could be changed so that interest is reinvested in the fund if the Council so wished. Interest will continue to be reported to members through the Officers Update and the regular financial reports.

Attendance Register

Officers have worked on how we want this to look, in the interest of transparency and being easy to follow. Widescope are finalising how the attendance register will appear on the website, and we expect to have it up and running next week.

River Wansbeck and Barrage

Following our Freedom of Information request, the information received has now been circulated to all members by email.

Allotments

North Seaton Colliery

- Hedges are to be cut back, and a contractor walkabout will be arranged to agree the scope of work.
- Roadway works are booked in for 23 November.
- Eviction follow-up communication is ongoing regarding a plot on site where an eviction has taken place.

Woodhorn

- New plot holders are being onboarded to the site.
- Work is under way to clear and prepare unoccupied plots for reletting.
- Pothole repairs are being carried out on site.
- Following plot inspections, letters are being issued to plot holders.

Nursery Park

- The first green waste collection has been completed, with a further collection scheduled for February.

Wansbeck Road

- Reports have been received of fires on site at the weekend, and these are being followed up by the Committee.
- Discussions are ongoing regarding trees overhanging from the churchyard.

AGENDA 5, Enc ii) OFFICERS UPDATE – 10th NOVEMBER 2026

Highmarket

- A site meeting with the committee is planned to review the boundary fencing.
- Discussions are ongoing regarding trees overhanging from the churchyard.

Green Lane

- New boundary fencing is to be installed. The contractor has been contacted, and we are awaiting an installation date. Contact made with NCC

Hirst East End

New plot vacant meeting on Thursday to re allocate

Neighbourhood Services and Street Scene

Bothal Gateway

Improvements are under way at the Bothal Gateway on the A197 Morpeth Road. A new boundary wall has been built by a local contractor, funded via ward Cllrs environmental enhancement budget. Ryan has since prepared the ground, added some new features and returned suitable plants to the site. Bulbs will give a splash of colour in the spring, and the bed will be fully planted next year with low-maintenance, sustainable planting chosen for year-round interest. A press release has been issued, including an AI-generated image of how we hope the gateway will look in time.

Memorial Garden Planting Day

Thank you to all members who joined us on Friday 30th October. Officers were joined by families, young people and volunteers to plant 400 Red Riding Hood tulips, along with some hyacinths, ready for a vibrant show of red next spring. Children from Wildfox Day Nursery threw themselves into it, and we were joined by Grace from the Woodhorn Weeders, Civic Head Cllr Caroline Ball and Cllr Louis Brown, with support from Ryan, and Tim and Sean from NCC. Thanks also to Steve at Ashington Cricket Club for letting us use the club to serve refreshments afterwards. The garden looked its very best for Remembrance Sunday.

Litter Bins

Following FGS Committee's approval of the phased litter bin upgrade programme on 20th October, a response has been received from NCC regarding the use of Members Local Improvement Scheme (MLIS) funding. NCC's position is now that our strategic enhancement of litter bins is not capital spending, mainly because we are not replacing all of the town's bins at the same time. The bins do meet the cost threshold and are a capital asset lasting more than one year, but unfortunately the programme has fallen into a grey area and County Cllrs cannot use their MLIS funding to support new bins. The Council will therefore be asked to set aside money for this project, in the current year this will be a good use of underspend; in future years the budget will need to be committed. This will be brought to the December meeting.

Bus Shelters

The new shelters at The Northern and Briardene have now been installed. Our posts about them generated really positive engagement, which we have been keen to build on. Once the slats have been delivered and the metal framework, which is being made locally, is ready, seats will be fitted to all shelters, wherever possible, as soon as we can.

AGENDA 5, Enc ii) OFFICERS UPDATE – 10th NOVEMBER 2026

Public Seats

Publicity on the recent public seat upgrades has prompted residents to tell us where more seating is needed, with Hirst and Alexandra Road in particular highlighted. Good seating helps people, especially our older residents, to get out and about, support the town centre and enjoy community spaces such as Hirst Welfare. We will look at options for additional seats in these areas in advance of spring.

Events and Engagement

Trick or Treat Trail

The Halloween trick or treat trail in Ashington was a record-breaking success this year, with 30 shops taking part, the highest number the event has seen.

More than 100 families joined in the trail, and every participating shop reported seeing more children than in previous years. The event brought plenty of footfall to local businesses and gave families a fun, safe way to enjoy Halloween in the town centre.

The Council would like to thank all the shops that took part and everyone who came along and looks forward to building on this success next year.

Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade, Sunday 8th November 2026

The Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade took place on Sunday 8th November and was well attended, with hundreds of residents coming together in Ashington. The parade marched along Station Road to the Memorial Garden, where Ashington Churches Together conducted the service. Attendance included cadets and youth groups, representatives of Northumbria Police, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and North East Ambulance Service, Deputy Lord Lieutenant Alison Germany, and Ian Lavery MP.

Feedback so far has been positive. Attendees described it as a lovely service, and the rain held off for the duration of the event.

Thanks, have gone out to the Deputy Lord Lieutenant Alison Germany, Mr Ian Lavery MP the Royal British Legion Ashington Branch, Zulu Company 5th Battalion, Ashington Colliery Band, Ashington and District Male Voice Choir, Ashington Community Singers, Ashington Camera Club, Ashington WI for the poppy wreath display, and all the youth organisations and emergency services who took part.

Remembrance and Christmas Projections

The Remembrance projections on the Town Hall Clock Tower, Leisure Centre, Bridge and gable end opposite Wetherspoons have been very well received again this year. Christmas projections will follow and we expect these to be just as popular. We have also had a request from Mortal Fools to feature in a projection after Christmas, which I am looking into.

Christmas Lights

The Christmas lights are being installed ready for the switch-on on Saturday 21st November, from 2pm until the lights go on at 5pm. We hope to see as many members there as possible.

Best of Northumberland Awards 2026

The Council nominated the Ashington Community Litter Project for the Northumberland Gazette's Best of Northumberland Awards, and we are delighted to report that they have been shortlisted in the Community Group of the Year category. This is well deserved recognition for the volunteers who give their time week in, week out to keep the town clean.

Other Ashington organisations have also been shortlisted:

Sporting Achievement of the Year - Ashington Town FC Under 17s Titans

Community Champion / Group of the Year - Ashington AFC

New Business of the Year - Northumberland Haunted Museum CIC, and The Tipsy Bean

Tourism Business of the Year - Wansbeck Riverside Caravan Park

Lifetime Achievement Award - Alan Stanfield

The winners will be announced at Slaley Hall on Thursday 3rd December. Good luck to everyone, and congratulations to all on reaching the shortlist.

Play Areas and Community Safety

People's Park – Design Out Crime

Following the Design Out Crime meeting at Paddock Wood (on agenda), a similar meeting is being held at People's Park on Thursday 12th November to look at the issues with cars gathering in the car park and vehicles on the field. A report will follow. As with Paddock Wood, it is likely that many of the actions will sit with NCC.

County Cllr Gordon Stewart has been invited to attend a meeting of the CCTV Committee and/or Council.

Website and Social Media PR

Website

Councillors, residents, community groups and visitors are encouraged to explore the updated website and share their feedback. Anyone who spots an issue or has suggestions for further improvements is welcome to contact the Council directly.

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

Article Title	Date
Ashington Pays Solemn Tribute to the Fallen on Remembrance Sunday	9th November 2026
Bothal Gateway gets a fresh look – with more to come in spring	4th November 2026
Finance and General Services Committee meeting on Tuesday 10th November	2nd November 2026
400 Tulips and a Lot of Love at Ashington Memorial Garden	30th October 2026
Civic Head celebrates 20 years of Woodhorn Museum's landmark redevelopment	29th October 2026

AGENDA 5, Enc ii) OFFICERS UPDATE – 10th NOVEMBER 2026

Article Title	Date
Working together pays off with five new seats for Bothal Ward	23rd October 2026
Ashington Town Council backs young people, cleaner streets and greater transparency	22nd October 2026
Ashington's Christmas Lights Switch-On Gets a New Saturday Slot	20th October 2026

Facebook

The Council's Facebook page had an exceptionally strong period from 12 October to 8 November 2026, with every key audience metric up on the previous reporting period. The page has now reached 4,300 followers.

This growth was driven by the events taking place around Ashington and the Council's coverage of them, including Halloween, Remembrance Sunday and the Christmas lights switch-on. Residents continue to respond strongly to posts about community occasions and good news from the town.

Views reached 231,100, an increase of 109.4%, with 67.0% coming from non-followers, so content is reaching well beyond the existing audience. Unique viewers totalled 40,974, up 81.2%. Content interactions rose 135.3% to around 2,000. Interactions from followers rose 80% to 1,145, while interactions from non-followers rose 285.5% to 902. Facebook visits totalled 3,000, an increase of 58.3%.

The page recorded 83 new follows, up 245.8%, against 9 unfollows, a net gain of 74 followers, up 289.5%. This brings the page to 4,300 followers. Video performance was the one weaker area, with 48 three-second views (down 9.4%) and a total watch time of 11 minutes 26 seconds (down 45.1%).

Overall, this period more than reversed the previous quieter one, with strong growth in reach, visits, engagement and new followers, and two-thirds of all views coming from outside the current follower base.

Date	Post	Reactions	Comments	Shares
23/10/2026	♡ ASHINGTON REMEMBERS ♡ It's wonderful to see our Remembrance displays lighting up Ashington once…	259	8	23
22/10/2026	🎄✨ Ashington's Christmas Light Switch On is coming to a Saturday afternoon! ✨🎄 Get ready for a fest…	49	14	31

AGENDA 5, Enc ii) OFFICERS UPDATE – 10th NOVEMBER 2026

23/10/2026	Seating to follow at new bus shelters at The Northern and Briardene Ashington Town Council has inst…	110	37	4
19/10/2026	REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERVICE & PARADE – ASHINGTON Ashington will come together to remember on Sun…	40	3	21
30/10/2026	400 Tulips Planted in Ashington Memorial Garden It was a wonderful morning at Ashington Mem…	87	8	6
23/10/2026	Community Planting Day at Ashington Memorial Garden Residents are invited to join Ashington Tow…	28	0	17
23/10/2026	Residents in the Bothal Ward now have five new seats to enjoy, installed by Ashington Town Council …	73	10	1
04/11/2026	Northumberland Rail has just shared with us... "We've just been advised by Northern that some off p…	13	11	11
19/10/2026	Ashington Town Council's HALLOWEEN TRAIL Get ready for a spooky adventure! Our biggest ever Hal…	3	1	17
12/10/2026	Ashington Town Council's Halloween Trail Get ready for a spooky adventure! Our biggest ever Hal…	11	2	12