

AGENDA 5, Enc ii) OFFICERS UPDATE – 8th SEPTEMBER 2026

Allotments

This report provides Members with an update on the management of the Council's allotment sites, including rent collection, site inspections, fire safety measures, plot improvement and re-letting works, scheduled maintenance, and reported incidents of theft.

Woodhorn Road

Rent collection for the current period has now concluded. Four tenants failed to make payment, and subsequently their tenancies have been terminated. These plots are expected to be re-occupied in the autumn. Improvement works continue to further more plots to be brought back into use.

Site Inspections

Due to the scale of the site, inspections at Woodhorn are carried out in stages. It would not be feasible to inspect all plots and deal with the resulting paperwork and re-inspection in one go – inspections are ongoing. Full site inspections have been completed at North Seaton Colliery, Nursery Park, and Hirst East End. As a result of these inspections, three tenancies have been terminated following due contact and notices to improve in accordance with the tenancy.

Fire Safety

Following concerns raised at Seaton Hirst, a fire ban has been implemented at the site, and a meeting with the tenants' association is being arranged to discuss the matter further. A fire ban has also been introduced at Woodhorn Road, in line with recommendations issued by Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service.

Plot Improvement and Re-letting

Plot improvement works have commenced across the town council managed sites. I have contacted individuals on the waiting list with a view to allocating vacant plots over the coming months. Plots at Nursery Park have already been successfully re-let, with a further plot being halved to reduce the waiting list and make the plot more manageable.

Scheduled Maintenance

Weed spraying has been scheduled at HEE, NSC & NP for September. Metal recycling collection days have also been arranged at North Seaton Colliery, Hirst East End and Nursery Park, with an additional UPVC collection to take place at North Seaton Colliery. Plot holders to be updated.

Reported Thefts

A number of thefts have been reported at Hirst East End. Affected plot holders have been advised to report incidents directly to Northumbria Police, and enquiries into available CCTV footage are ongoing.

Neighbourhood Services and Street Scene

Horticulture

Nothing to report – scheduled maintenance continues according to the planner. Orders for winter plants for towers and planters will be placed, as well as additional bulbs for the Memorial Garden which we are hoping to arrange a planting day for in October half-term.

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Litter Bins

Residents and Cllrs continue to report litter bins being past their best and less than optimum capacity. The plan remains to review the whole town following the end of summer and new routes developing with College. It would be helpful if Cllrs can explain this rationale where residents feel we are ignoring requests. County Cllrs have been very generous with their available Members Local Improvement Scheme Funding (MLIS) therefore it is hoped a discounted deal can be negotiated with the supplier. This will be brought back to Council prior to ordering.

Public Seats

X5 new style seats have been ordered for the Bothal Ward with funding from Cllr Scott Amery. As soon as space for delivery can be made these will be delivered and installed. Some of those being removed cannot be recycled, others will be donated where clubs can refurbish and install themselves.

Bus Shelters

Funding has been confirmed for the bus shelters from NCC, via NECA, *BSIP Safe and Accessible Bus Stops*. On confirmation the orders were immediately placed with GS Shelter Solutions. The replacements being installed are at The Northern (North Seaton), and Briardene (Haydon). Funding was also secured for seating to be installed in those shelters without. Seating is being fabricated locally by Websters Workshop who have fabricated seats at North Seaton.

A couple of bus shelters in Haydon were vandalised. This has been reported to the police as video footage is available.

Storage and Recycling

We are looking into the possibility of a container for storage; this would be located at Woodhorn Road Allotments. The unit is appropriately used for tools and equipment, but we also have planters taking up a great deal of space, as well as having no space for the delivery of seats and bins. We will also investigate a compost heap, and recycling station. Presently we have nowhere for the movement of waste – this could be a possibility.

Play Areas

Sadly, we have suffered vandalism at People's Park and Alexandra Road play areas. Most repairs have now been completed following a lengthy lead in time for parts.

Paddock Wood Play Area tender will be finalised and presented to the October FGS Committee.

Events and Engagement

Sound Futures Festival

The event was hugely enjoyed by those who attended. We have a post-event meeting scheduled with YMCA next week; a report will be brought back to Council when complete, as well as being followed up with the Youth Advisory Committee who championed this event.

Full Circle Food Project Packed Lunches

Following the Council's agreed financial support, and working through the Youth Advisory Committee, the Council supported a free packed lunch offer during the summer holidays with Full Circle Food Project, based at Hirst Park. Rather than limiting numbers, the opportunity was open to all and demand-led, running one day each week across the holidays.

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310 packed lunches have been given out throughout the summer. At the outset this was on a Thursday, on week 3 this was expanded to Tuesday also, and some Wednesdays.

Michelle will feed back to the Youth Advisory Committee how the sessions have worked with a view to planning for the future. There is a demand for activities within the park which would help with engagement.

Free Swim Sessions

The Free Swim programme is a community initiative funded by Ashington Town Council, delivered in partnership with Ashington Leisure Centre (Places Leisure). The programme provides free, open-access swimming sessions during school holiday periods, welcoming residents of all ages and abilities to enjoy the pool at no cost. Sessions have been booked for the remainder of the year.

Date	Day	Time	80 Slots Available
22 July 2026	Wednesday	1pm – 2pm	36
25 July 2026	Saturday	2:30pm – 3:30pm	45
29 July 2026	Wednesday	1pm – 2pm	47
1 August 2026	Saturday	2:30pm – 3:30pm	39
5 August 2026	Wednesday	1pm – 2pm	48
8 August 2026	Saturday	2:30pm – 3:30pm	30
12 August 2026	Wednesday	1pm – 2pm	53
15 August 2026	Saturday	2:30pm – 3:30pm	23
19 August 2026	Wednesday	1pm – 2pm	55
22 August 2026	Saturday	2:30pm – 3:30pm	47
26 August 2026	Wednesday	1pm – 2pm	TBC
29 August 2026	Saturday	2:30pm – 3:30pm	TBC
Total attendees to date			423