

New Website

This is a standing item on Clerk and Officer updates. Recent updates to the website news page include the following, as well as other local events:

- Details of the Great British Spring Clean Launch and after photos
- Our NSO Vacancy
- The Queen's Jubilee Funding Launch
- Annual Grant Aid Launch (including updated Grants page)
- NCC Local Plan – Adoption
- Civic Head attending Platinum Anniversary of Ashington residents Mr and Mrs Auld

Jack Charlton Statue/Charlton Brothers Commemorative Project

The Assets and Facilities Manager is seeking costs and plans for the groundworks to install the statue at Hirst Park; this will include the specification for foundations. Once these are received, the Clerk will go through the mandatory process to establish whether planning permission is required. A draft licence has been received from Strategic Estates, which is on the agenda for the Council to agree 'in principle.'

Once the remaining pledged funding is received, it is expected that £8,437 will remain in the Jack Charlton Statue budget, which will cover the groundworks required. Subject to the Council's approval, any unspent funding from the Council budget could be re-directed to the Charlton Brothers Commemorative Project.

Presently, the Council has £5,000 pledged towards the Charlton Brothers Commemorative Project from Northumberland County Council. Additional funds will be required. A concept is being drawn up that celebrates both Jack and Bobby, World Cup success, and celebrated footballers from Ashington. It is envisioned that there will be four storyboards set into a structure which will also be in Hirst Park, near to the statue of Jack.

Barry Mead has offered to take forward the work on the storyboards (text and images) and is offering his services as a volunteer. Barry would then lead the design element in consultation with the Working Group and Officers, and Green Spaces Officers from Hirst Park. A worked-up design and will be brought back to the Council for approval, along with an estimate of costs.

Recruitment

There have been several applications for the post of Neighbourhood Services Officer. The closing date is Thursday 14th April. Interviews will be scheduled for w/c 9th May 2022, date to be agreed with the Personnel Committee.

The Queen's Jubilee Funding

The closing date for applications is 29th April. At the time of writing, we are aware of four applications that are forthcoming. As well as being shared across our media periodically, Community Groups were emailed directly, and have received reminders.

Annual Grant Aid Funding

There has been a lively response to the Annual Grant Aid funding being launched. Funding has been updated on the [website](#). Cllrs will be invited to review applicants on a date between 16th May and 1st June, allowing a recommendation to come to the Finance and General Services Committee on 14th June 2022. Dates/times will be agreed with members when we know how many applications we have.

The first instalment of Small Grants will not be launched until after the Annual Grant Aid has closed.

Christmas Lights – Preferred Supplier

We have briefly met with a few contractors who are very keen to present to members, with the aim of being the council's preferred supplier for Christmas Lights.

Members will be asked to agree to attend presentations on 25th, 26th or 27th April depending on the availability of all parties. It is important that members can attend all presentations for ease of comparison, and we will try our best to schedule these for the same afternoon/evening.

Station Road Planting

Sean Murray of Garden Narratives is due to present the designs for Station Road on 30th May, these will be brought to the Finance and General Services meeting in June, to endorse and agree to source plants, as being proposed for the Gateways on this agenda.

Alexandra Road Play Area

At the time of writing Ward Cllrs were looking at designs. As per delegated authority and order for the equipment will be placed by the Assets and Facilities Manager.

It is expected that a proposal to install CCTV will be brought to the May FGS, as well as costs to repaint fencing.