AGENDA 8, Enc viii) ALLOTMENT LIAISON COMMITTEE DRAFT Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15th October 2026 at 5:00pm in the Council Chamber, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RU.

PRESENT

Cllr Members Present: Cllr Marjorie Chambers, Cllr Kerry Davison, Cllr Glyn Davies, Cllr Sonia Simm.

Allotment Site Rep Members Present: Brent Moffat (GL), Brian Henderson (GL), Peter Blake (HM), Peter Merryweather (HEE), David Walker (HEE), Louis Brown (NSC), Annie Hart (NSC), Pam Ingoe (SH), Margaret Adams (WR), Lynne Norris (WR), Jonathan Patterson (WHR), David Street (WHR).

In attendance: Sarah Eden (Executive Officer/RFO), Alan Bunker (Allotment Officer)

AL2627/01 ELECTION OF CHAIR
Nominations were invited for Chair of the Allotment Liaison Committee.
It was AGREED that Cllr Kerry Davison be elected Chair of the Allotment Liaison Committee.

AL2627/02 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR
Nominations were invited for Vice-Chair of the Allotment Liaison Committee.
It was AGREED that Cllr Marjorie Chambers be elected Vice-Chair of the Allotment Liaison Committee.

AL2627/03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Cllr John Tully, Chris Lang (GL), Peter Jobson (NSC)

AL2627/04 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS
There were no disclosures of interest.

AL2627/05 DISPENSATIONS
There were no dispensations.

AL2627/06 ALLOTMENT CAPITAL WORKS 2026/27 – ASSESSMENT AND PRIORITISATION
The report was received. Members noted that the roadway works, which had been identified as the priority, have been booked in. Fencing at Green Lane will be booked as soon as possible and confirmation is awaited from the contractor.

Fencing at the east end of Hirst East was raised, and it was agreed this would be looked into. No other works were put forward.
It was AGREED that the report be received and noted.

AL2627/07 RECYCLING EFFORTS
The report was received. The Clerk drew attention to the efforts of the Allotment Officer in recycling across the sites, including glass, plastic window frames, green waste, metal, and bricks and hardcore. The Clerk noted that she speaks with many town and parish councils with allotments and is not aware of any achieving anywhere near this level.

The Allotment Officer passed on a huge thanks to everyone for their support, adding that the removal of bricks and hardcore in particular needs a team, as it is very labour intensive.

It was AGREED that the report be received and noted.

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AL2627/08 FLY-TIPPING

The report was received. Discussion centred on keeping sites as secure as possible, including keeping gates locked, to prevent fly-tipping.

The negative impact of fly-tipping and the reality of asbestos on sites were discussed. In response to a question about booking set dates for asbestos removal, it was clarified that the Council arranges for asbestos to be taken away when it is uncovered. Seeking out asbestos and booking in collection days could encourage people to go looking for it and put themselves at risk. Council policy is that anyone who sees asbestos should report it immediately; no one should wait for a collection date or dig it out.

The Clerk advised that the Town Council is very grateful to Northumberland County Council, who remove fly-tipping from allotment sites even though this is not their land. Without that support, removal would come at a cost to the Council and to the allotment budget.
It was AGREED that the report be received and noted.

AL2627/09 ALLOTMENT FIRES

The note was received and discussed in detail. The note set out that this summer's hot, dry weather led to some garden fires on allotments getting out of control, and that such summers may become more frequent. It summarised the existing bonfire rules on ATC-managed sites, under which wilful breaches are treated as gross misconduct. It also noted that the Allotment Officer had supported the High Market and Wansbeck Road associations to bring in their own burning restrictions in spring, and was working with Seaton Hirst Allotment Association and local residents to do the same. It also referred to this summer's government alert advising against lighting fires.

Representatives from sites that had imposed their own restrictions reported that these were working well.

David Street, site representative for Woodhorn Road, described the fire at that site, including how quickly it took hold. He highlighted the potential consequences for the Fire and Rescue Service, as all available engines had attended, and the risk had there been another call-out at the same time. He also explained that he had to agree to re-check the site hourly through the night to make sure the fire did not reignite.

It was discussed that the Town Council does not want to impose bans, and with common sense and responsible action it is unlikely to have to. Any restrictions would be introduced with the support of sites and representatives, or under the direction of government advice, as was the case this summer. The Allotment Officer will liaise with site representatives, but ultimately safety comes first and the Allotment Officer will ensure that is the case.
It was AGREED that the note be received and the committee's comments be noted to inform future arrangements.

AL2627/10 REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS POLICY

The draft Allotment Reasonable Adjustments Policy was considered. No questions or concerns were raised. The Clerk explained that the policy would be presented to Full Council for approval.
It was AGREED that the draft Allotment Reasonable Adjustments Policy be recommended to Full Council for approval.

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AL2627/11 DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The Clerk advised that as rents were fixed, it was not expected there would be a further meeting until the next Capital Works meeting in October 2027. However, the terms of reference allowed a meeting to be called if necessary. This comes with the caveat that the Allotment Officer is responsible for the day-to-day management of those sites directly tenanted by the Council, and liaises directly with Allotment Associations in regards to others.