AGENDA 10, Enc xiv) NURSERY PARK – LANDSCAPING AT THE ENTRANCE TO ST JOHN'S CEMETERY

1. *Purpose of report*

To present the proposed landscaping concept and estimated costs for a new environmental enhancement feature at Nursery Park, at the entrance to St John's Cemetery, and to seek approval for the proposed funding and delegated arrangements for delivery.

2. *Background*

The proposal is to improve the appearance of the entrance to St John's Cemetery at Nursery Park through a coordinated, sustainable planting scheme. The project has been brought forward by Cllr John Tully, with the support of Councillors representing both Haydon and College wards as the site straddles the boundary between Haydon and College wards.

The land is not owned by Ashington Town Council. However, Northumberland County Council (NCC) has approved the proposed works, allowing the scheme to progress. Maintenance will become the responsible of ATC, covered later in the report.

3. *Proposed scheme*

The agreed concept provides three planting areas to create a welcoming entrance with colour, structure and seasonal interest, while keeping ongoing maintenance manageable.

The scheme comprises:

- **Planting behind the existing wall:** a 14m-long planting bed to soften the stonework and enhance the entrance.
- **A feature planting bed on the grass:** a 6m × 2m, pill-shaped bed positioned to retain access for ride-on mowing.
- **Planting around the cemetery sign:** a circular bed approximately 2m in diameter, designed to enhance the sign while keeping it clearly visible.

The planting scheme uses six selected varieties: Gaura 'Whirling Butterflies', Stipa tenuissima, Nepeta 'Walkers Low', Lavandula 'Hidcote', Sedum 'Autumn Joy' and trailing Campanula poscharskyana. These have been selected to provide complementary colour, texture and seasonal interest, with drought tolerance and relatively low maintenance requirements.

The two lawn beds and the sign bed will have simple, flush easy-edge edging to facilitate mowing. Composted bark mulch will be used during the first year to help establish the planting.

The existing bin and cemetery sign will be retained but enhanced, with grass-cutting issues designed out.

The accompanying landscaping concept illustrates the proposed design, planting approach and maintenance principles. The final agreed planting schedule sets out the detailed layout, quantities and specifications for implementation.

4. *Delivery and maintenance*

It is proposed that Ryan, our Neighbourhood Services Officer, will work with the Two-Wheeled Gardeners, well-known local contractors familiar with the area.

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The proposed start date is 31st March 2027, subject to weather and site conditions; which is the soonest planting could commence.

Following completion, the area will be incorporated into the Town Council's own grounds maintenance programme, notwithstanding that the land remains in NCC ownership.

In keeping with other areas managed by the Town Council, the design has been developed with sustainability and practical maintenance in mind. The intended maintenance frequency is:

- **High season:** a weekly visit for inspection, weeding and general tidying as required.
- **Low season:** a monthly visit, including cutting back and other seasonal maintenance as required.

The layout and flush edging are intended to make the mowing carried out by NCC, and our own routine grounds maintenance straightforward, while the plant selection should provide resilient planting and year-round structure with limited ongoing intervention.

5. *Estimated costs and funding*

The estimated project cost is £3,000, including contingency.

Item	**Estimated cost**
Plants	£1,800
Site preparation, installation and associated works by contractors	£1,000
Contingency	£200
Total budget requested	**£3,000**

The proposed funding is available from existing environmental enhancement and climate change budgets:

Budget	**Allocation**
Haydon Ward Environmental Enhancement budget – remaining balance	£2,395
College Ward Environmental Enhancement budget – remaining balance	£40
Climate Change Projects and Initiatives	£565
Total funding	**£3,000**

The allocations above utilise the remaining balances in the two ward environmental enhancement budgets, with the balance funded from Climate Change Projects and Initiatives. The proposed total provides for the estimated works and a contingency, with expenditure managed within the approved budget.

6. *Recommendation*

The Council is recommended to:

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- **Receive** the landscaping concept and the estimated costs for the proposed environmental enhancement at Nursery Park, at the entrance to St John's Cemetery.
- **Approve** a project budget of £3,000, funded by £2,395 from the Haydon Ward Environmental Enhancement budget, £40 from the College Ward Environmental Enhancement budget and £565 from Climate Change Projects and Initiatives.
- **Delegate authority to the Executive Officer** to progress and deliver the approved planting scheme, working with Ryan and the Two-Wheeled Gardeners, within the agreed budget and in accordance with the final planting specification.
- **Note** that the land is owned by Northumberland County Council, which has approved the proposed works, and that the completed area will be incorporated into the Town Council's grounds maintenance programme.

NORTH SEATON CEMETERY – LANDSCAPING CONCEPT

Sustainable planting and a neat, welcoming entrance



SCHEME FEATURES

- Six carefully chosen plants for a cohesive and attractive scheme
- Planting behind the wall softens the stone and enhances the entrance
- Pill-shaped bed on the lawn with flush, easy edge for a neat finish and mower access
- Simple, clean edging around the sign bed
- Low maintenance, drought-tolerant and resilient planting
- Seasonal interest with year-round structure and colour

THE SIX PLANTS



Gaura 'Whirling Butterflies'
90–100cm | Jun–Oct
(tallest plant)



Stipa tenuissima
50–60cm | Summer-year round
(movement & texture)



Nepeta 'Walkers Low'
50–60cm | May–Sep
(long-flowering filler)



Lavandula 'Hidcote'
40cm | Jun–Aug
(neat, low, evergreen)



Sedum 'Autumn Joy'
40–50cm | Aug–Oct
(late-season colour)



Campanula poscharskyana
15cm | Jun–Sep
(trailing edge plant)

LOW MAINTENANCE BENEFITS

- Drought tolerant and resilient
- Minimal upkeep once established
- Weekly high season visit for weeding and tidying
- Monthly low season visit for cutting back as required
- Neat, well maintained entrance all year round

BIN ON CONCRETE BASE



- Glasdon Jubilee bin or flush concrete slab
- Neat edge allows easy grass cutting up to the base
- Practical, durable and easy to maintain

PLANTING LAYOUT (EXAMPLE VIEW)



Long wall bed (14m x 1.5m) and pill-shaped lawn bed (6m x 2m)

CEMETERY SIGN



Circular bed (approx. 2m diameter)

PLANTING SUMMARY

Area 1 (behind wall)	148 plants
Area 2 (lawn bed)	72 plants
Area 3 (sign bed)	20 plants
Total	**240 plants** + 13 spares = **253 plants**

SUSTAINABLE & RESILIENT
Drought tolerant, climate ready plants with long-lasting structure and seasonal interest.

EASY MAINTENANCE
Simple planting design and durable, easy edge borders for minimal upkeep.

A WELCOMING ENTRANCE
A neat, attractive and timeless entrance that reflects the pride of North Seaton Cemetery.