



Ashington Parish Council

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MINUTES of the Open Spaces and Environment Committee Meeting held on Thursday 23rd April 2026, at 7:30pm Ashington Community Centre, Foster Lane, Ashington

Present:

Councillors: Sam Barnett, Jeanette Lowson, Marcus Meldrum, John Morris

In attendance:

Clerk and RFO: Lee English

Members of the Public: 4

Members of the public were reminded that they limit their participation to the Public Adjournment section of the meeting, and that any matters raised should be with regards to an item on the agenda (Standing Orders allow for 5 minutes maximum per person). Questions relating to any other items that are not on the agenda should be referred to the Chair of the Council or the Clerk as appropriate and outside of the meeting.

OSE/01/26	<u>Apologies for absence</u> Tony Moss
OSE/02/26	<u>Declaration of Interests</u> None
OSE/03/26	<u>Public Adjournment</u> No issues raised
OSE/04/26	<u>Play areas and Skatepark</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Annual inspection of play areas – clerk to undertake a review of costs.2. Skatepark annual service – clerk to undertake a review of costs.
OSE/05/26	<u>Open Space and environment projects</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Swifts – a report was provided on the swift sightings at the northern end of the village.2. Hedgehogs – Report at Appendix 13. Nature Trail project This is expected to be completed in the next 2-3 years and covers many activities and projects, including –<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bug boxes- Reptile refuges

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New hedging - Wildflower areas - Database of wildlife present - Engage with Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre - Citizen Science Projects - Signage on the trail to highlight species present <p>4. Community Roadside Verges (CRVs) – we are still seeking confirmation that 2 verges identified can be classed as CRVs.</p> <p>5. Green/environmental initiatives on new developments – We are in contact with Elivia Homes for an update regarding swift bricks, hedgehog highways etc. We will be in contact with Bellway Homes and Rocco Homes once the developments progress.</p>
OSE/06/26	<p><u>Annual Land Inspection</u></p> <p>The report and priorities were agreed. The clerk will liaise with the landscape contractor to action issues raised. Quotes for work will be submitted to Full Council for approval.</p>
OSE/07/26	<p><u>WSCC Donate a Tree Scheme</u></p> <p>The scheme is run by WSCC –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trees will be supplied and planted in the next planting season (Nov - Feb), if ordered by the end of July. - Each tree will be approx. 2-3 m tall, with a strimmer guard and irrigation tube installed. - For the first 3 years, the Young Tree Maintenance Team will inspect the trees annually and carry out routine maintenance and formative pruning. - A Tree Species List offers a choice of trees suitable for a Highway verge. <p>The contribution cost is £283 per tree (subject to a possible price rise in April).</p> <p>The council received a donation of £2,000 for in February 2021 (036/21) for trees to be planted on parish, public or WSCC land and/or to support a new project to improve and enhance wildlife provision. Part of the donation was used to plant a Hornbeam hedge in the council's memorial garden - £1,744.92 remains of the donation.</p> <p>It was proposed to purchase 6 trees for planting in the parish, for Full Council to approve the expenditure and for the committee to submit the application to WSCC with appropriate locations and species of trees to be planted.</p>
OSE/08/26	<p><u>Tree Wardens</u></p> <p>WSCC work with the Tree Council who run the scheme nationally and coordinate the scheme in partnership with local parish and town councils.</p> <p>It was proposed that the recruitment of a tree warden/s be presented to Full Council for approval.</p>
OSE/09/26	<p><u>Ashington in Bloom</u></p> <p>An update was received from the volunteers of the initiative.</p> <p>The Finance Committee will be presenting the following to Full Council on 14th May with regards to the financial aspect to the initiative –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To create an Ashington in Bloom Earmarked Reserve (EMR) - To transfer in monies from other EMRs as appropriate

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sponsorship for the initiative - Agreement to hold sponsorship funds - Approved spending process for those funds <p>It was proposed to paint the front fence green at the Parish Yard and a proposal and expenditure will be presented to Full Council on 14th May. Projected expenditure £100 to cover all materials.</p> <p>Ashington School is happy to be involved with the initiative and ideas were discussed such as –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planting Sunflowers seed along the perimeter fence - An end of term mini Flower Festival - Distribution of packets of wildflower seeds to the children <p>The school noted that they would welcome help looking after their allotment and the committee will continue to liaise with them as to how this help can be achieved.</p>
OSE/10/26	<p><u>Love Your Street</u></p> <p>HDC run an Adopt a Street volunteer scheme that focusses on litter picking. It is proposed to introduce a Love Your Street initiative that encourages residents to look after the area in front of their properties and in their street. This could be to collect litter, tidy the verges, clean street signs, report issues such fly tipping or potholes, or other Highways issues.</p> <p>To be proposed to Full Council on 14th May.</p>
OSE/11/26	<p><u>Public Rights of Way</u></p> <p>It was noted the local Access Ranger will be organising PRow inspections next month in the parish.</p>

Meeting closed at pm

Signed: Date:

Appendix 1

Hedgehog Report

Jan-Apr 2025

The earliest sighting this year was on the 19th January of a young individual in a London Road garden who appearances coincided with bouts of warmer weather. Other sightings on the 13th February came from the Meiros Way area with a regular appearance, and in late February a pair were noted in a Covert Mead garden where they remained whilst food was provided.

Another youngster was seen in the road along Rectory Lane, in mid-April with signs of another individual from a Rectory Lane garden (it's pooped all over my lawn, was the report). Interesting the majority of sightings at the beginning of this year are of immature hedgehogs which at a guess are probably individuals born in the latter part last year which had not put on enough body weight to survive a long hibernation period. The first recorded and photographed sighting of a big old bruiser was on the 19th April fast asleep in a provided box.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has now expressed concern for the plight of all 5 European hedgehog species although at the same time it admits it has little credible data to substantiate its claims.

As it appears that hotter weather may be with us for a while, please ensure you make drinking water available.