

## PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015**Present**

Cllr Mrs E Burt (Chair), Cllr B Futers, Cllr G McCreedy, Cllr G Simpson, Cllr A Reid, Cllr K Graham, Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert, Cllr Mrs J McGee, Cllr Mrs N McGee, Cllr A Piper

**1516/062 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr E Dobson, Cllr A Gill, Cllr G Price, Cllr Ms Rose

**1516/063 Declarations of Interest NONE****1516/064 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting, held on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015****It was AGREED to receive the minutes**

Proposed: Cllr G Simpson

Seconded: Cllr G McCreedy

**1516/065 Matters Arising**

**Page 1 – Tour of Britain**, Cllr Mrs Burt took the opportunity to thank everyone involved and to commend the town, who she said ‘did itself proud’. Cllr Mrs J McGee said the event was great and it was especially pleasing that so many children from local schools were able to line the streets. Cllr Mrs J McGee thanked the staff for their efforts, especially with regard to communicating the details of the race. Cllr Futers said that the Police Inspector he spoke to said that Prudhoe was the most impressive town in the Tyne Valley, with respect to receiving and welcoming the tour. High praise was also passed on from the Jiggery Pokery at Mickley, via Cllr Mrs Cuthbert; they were delighted with their certificate for taking part in the shop front competition. Cllr Simpson commented that he did not think he would see the day that so many Northumberland flags were flying, but was so impressed that he did and hoped that this level Northumbrian Patriotism could be shared again, maybe for St. Cuthbert’s Day (Patron Saint of Northumberland).

**Page 2 – Television License Scheme**, Cllr Mrs Burt asked if there were any issues with the new method of refunding £30 towards the cost of licenses. The administrator advised that the scheme was working well.

**Page 4** – Cllr McCreedy asked for an update on **street lighting at the bottom of Moor Road**. Cllr Reid reported that he suggested Moor Road have lights installed at the same time as the scheme for replacing all the lights in Prudhoe, the lights would cost an additional £900/each but it seemed sensible to get them done at the same time. Cllr Reid would continue to take this forward.

**Page 5** – Cllr Mrs Burt asked for feedback on the **‘Keep Britain Tidy’ Campaign**. The clerk advised that there was no report as yet.

**1516/066 Report of Planning, Contracts and Works Committee, held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015****It was AGREED to receive the report**

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr A Reid

**1516/067 Accounts 2015/16**

a) **It was AGREED** to receive the bank reconciliations 10<sup>th</sup> July – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015

Proposed: Cllr A Reid

Seconded: Cllr Mrs J McGee

b) **It was AGREED** to receive the statement of Budget and Expenditure up to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015

Proposed: Cllr A Gill

Seconded: Cllr A Reid

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Cllr Mrs Burt asked if there were any immediate concerns regarding the budget and spending at this half-way point in the year. The administrator advised that everything was as expected, however there remained little spending on allotments, other than general utilities.

c) **It was AGREED** to endorse those payment in bold and approve further payments received since the July meeting (schedule of accounts was tabled)

Proposed: Cllr A Reid

Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

The clerk advised that the invoice for Sutcliffe Play, in respect of Highfield Park, had been received but not presented for payment, as outstanding issues remain. Additionally the clerk added that an apology had been received from the supplier and a meeting was arranged to progress all outstanding issues.

#### 1516/068 Annual Return

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** the notice of conclusion of audit and to display the conclusion notice. Cllrs **AGREED** that the minor issues raised were being dealt with satisfactorily by the administrator.

#### 1516/069 Review of Public Conveniences

**It was AGREED** to receive the report of the meeting with NCC on 4<sup>th</sup> September.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs Burt

Seconded: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Cllr Mrs Burt advised that the rationalisation of public conveniences comes from a cost-cutting exercise of £200,000. Cllr Mrs Burt reported that the meeting held was useful and generally speaking supported the loss of the Neale Street toilets (closed presently due to vandalism) as usage was very low, with the busier facilities remaining opposite the Dr Syntax. It was discussed that standards in the Road-Ends toilets (opposite Dr Syntax) required and uplift and although cleaned every day, there are some issues that require attention.

It was highlighted that if the toilets at Neale Street closed there would be scope for the 'You're Welcome' scheme to be used in the town. The Spetchells Centre were interested in being involved and the use of toilets at Waterworld needed to be checked as it was suggested these would not be included.

Cllr McCreedy commented that it was important there was signage to indicate where toilets are in the town. Cllr Mrs J McGee reported that the meeting made clear that they would not like to see the toilet block at Neale Street become run down and more at risk of vandalism, however it was up to NCC if they were demolished; Cllrs agreed the area should not become an eyesore.

Cllr Simpson supported the comments and in particular the suggestion for signage. Cllr Simpson added that it was difficult to justify County Council spending on public conveniences at the expense of Children's Service and Adult Services, claiming the service should be appropriately passed down to Town and Parish Councils.

Cllr Mrs Burt responded that at this moment in time NCC has agreed to continue to maintain and manage the Road Ends toilets, as they are well used and therefore justify being kept open. Cllr Mrs J McGee added that they also agreed to improve maintenance and paint the building.

Cllr Mrs Burt summarised that the council were happy with the offer and should write to NCC accordingly, as well as requesting finger post signage and inquiring as to whether Waterworld would be included in the 'You're Welcome' scheme.

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**1516/070 Highfield Park**

Cllr Mrs Burt introduced that at recent events at Highfield Park she felt there were safety issues as a result of a singular entrance for both vehicles and pedestrians. Having met with a County Officer, Cllr Mrs Burt brought 3 options to the table for comment.

Cllr Mrs J McGee suggested the 2<sup>nd</sup> option of creating a new pedestrian access at the east of the car park, halfway down Highfield Lane was preferable, feeling option 1 still created a conflict with vehicles. Cllr Couchman and Cllr Reid agreed. Cllr McCreedy suggested option 3 whereby the existing pedestrian entrance that is further east be widened and improved. Cllr Futers responded that users coming from the west would continue to use the existing entrance, thus still conflicting with traffic, as they would not walk past one entrance to get to another one further away. Cllr Simpson suggested the 1<sup>st</sup> option, a pedestrian entrance to the west of the vehicle entrance, and was concerned with safety throughout the year and not only at events. Cllr Simpson also suggested including an anti-dog grid at the entrance to the park.

**It was AGREED** to seek costs for all options.

**1516/071 Eastwoods Road: Resident Concerns**

The council received a letter from a resident regarding poor access to their property due to irresponsible parking on Eastwoods Road. Cllr Mrs Burt advised that the council do not know where the plans for Eastwoods Park and Eastwood Middle School are at this stage, and suggested this was clearly a linked issue. Cllr Mrs Burt described that the resident is very supportive of the development of the park, and of the football club but would like a meeting before plans are unveiled.

Cllr Mrs Burt hoped that the council would support a meeting with the residents, Prudhoe Youth Football Club and Active Northumberland. Cllr Couchman said that although it sounded like a good idea, he would be concerned not to raise people's expectations as the town council has little say in the process or the use of the land.

Cllr Reid expressed that 80% of complaints in the county relate to traffic and that he visited the resident in question and got a good account of the problems, stating that these echo those outside schools, etc. Cllr Reid expressed that he felt it futile to have a meeting with the town council now about these issues when they had no knowledge of how developments were progressing and it would be wiser to meet with PYFC and Active Northumberland to find out.

Cllr Futers agreed that the town council should support people who have issues with parking. Cllr Simpson agreed that the town council should facilitate a meeting of those parties concerned, adding that more and more developments appear with no respect to the highway concerns and these issues should be put right at the planning stages.

**It was AGREED** to arrange a meeting between PYFC, Active Northumberland and Ward Cllrs at the pavilion at Eastwoods Park, as well as inviting local residents to discuss the way forward.

**1516/072 Town Events**

- a) **It was AGREED** to RECEIVE the report of the Events Group meeting and to endorse the decisions made.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr B Futers

Cllr Mrs J McGee thanked the staff and volunteers for their hard work on the summer events, expressing that two consecutive weekends does take its toll. **It was AGREED** that more support was

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needed for events over the summer, especially car-parking as some Cllrs struggled to find the time. The administrator was hopeful that the Air Cadets would be available this year so car-parking would not be an issue.

Cllr Mrs J McGee reported the recommendations in respect of the Christmas Lights Switch-On. Cllr Mrs McGee was conscious of how the town would top last years' Switch-On, which was the best ever and most definitely the best in Tynedale. The recommendation is that there is a road closure in place from 4pm-8pm, from the traffic lights at the top of Station Bank to the entrance of Victoria Terrace. Cllr Mrs Burt and Cllr Reid expressed concern at having another road closure and especially during rush hour, as well as the fact that buses would also need to re-route. Cllr Futers reminded members that the 604 estate bus used to go through the Oaklands and could do so again during the event. Cllr Mrs Cuthbert expressed that the events committee want the switch-on event to grow, not to stand still, and additional safety precautions are going to be required.

The administrator confirmed that there would be no cost for the road closure, but full responsibility would be with the town council, for communication with residents, businesses and the bus company. Cllr Mrs J McGee also recommended a properly lit stage for school choirs and special guests.

**It was AGREED** to support the road closure and further recommendations for the Christmas Lights Switch-On Event.

b) Cllr Mrs J McGee reported that the SCA Prudhoe Miners Race was another good day, there was an increase in numbers from last year, especially in the 1.5K, and a fuller report would be given after a meeting with the race organiser. Cllr Reid expressed that having our Mitry-Mory friends running and supporting gave the event a bit of extra spice as there were a lot of characters.

#### **1516/073 Lychgate War Memorial**

Following correspondence from MP Guy Opperman, regarding slow progress on the Lychgate, the Clerk advised that a meeting was arranged with Rev. Charles Hope and it was expected that the awaited report would go to the DAC for their meeting in November. A further update would be given at the next ordinary meeting.

**It was AGREED** to advise both MP Guy Opperman and Mr Len Franchetti of this update.

#### **1516/074 Reports from outside bodies**

**Northumberland County Council (NCC)** – Cllr Reid reported that the Core Strategy was the main subject of discussion at present; the Pre-Submission Draft is available to view between 14<sup>th</sup> October and 25<sup>th</sup> November. Cllr Reid added that following consultation the Core Strategy will be finalised in February 2016 and fed into local government thereafter.

Cllr Reid reported that the NCC Central Area Committee heard the petition for a Fun Fair to be held again at Eastwoods Park and Bruce Ledger (Active Northumberland) declined its use; Turners Fun Fair were advised to investigate alternative sites. Tyne Riverside was suggested as an alternative to Eastwoods Park which was deemed unsuitable due to its mixed sporting use and fear of damage to the grassed areas.

Cllr Mrs Burt introduced Jon Walker who was in the public gallery and had requested to speak on the issue. Mr Walker stated that he felt the report given at the Central Area Committee was unfair, that 2009 was the last time Turner's Fun Fair visited Prudhoe and prior to that they had visited for a great number of years without issue. Mr Walker described that he saw Prudhoe Town Council as his council and felt they should be helping him deliver what the community want.

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Cllr Mrs Burt replied that she was not sure that Prudhoe Town Council as a whole was fully supportive of the fun fair being at Eastwoods Park, although some members were supportive of a Fun Fair in Prudhoe. Cllr Mrs Burt expressed that she did support the decision of NCC. Cllr Mrs J McGee added that the use of Eastwoods Park as a sports field is much greater now than it was in 2009.

Mr Walker responded that Eastwoods Park is a disgrace and he felt it very unfair to prevent the fair from visiting the area for one singular issue over a great number of years. Cllr Mrs Cuthbert asked Mr Walker why he was so opposed to the other sites that had been put forward as suggestions, Mr Walker replied that it was historical and the Fun Fair had always been at Eastwoods Park. Cllr Futers described that the Fun Fair had visited other sites in Prudhoe in times past and it would be worth looking at the sites suggested; stating the historical factor is that Prudhoe always had a Fun Fair.

Mr Walker left the meeting having indicated he would visit the sites at Princess Way and Tyne Riverside.

**Prudhoe Community Partnership (PCP)** - Cllr Mrs Burt reported that they were hoping to demolish the old Windsor Bakery prior to Christmas, the plans are all in and finances are being tied up.

#### 1516/075 Tabled and Correspondence Correspondence

#### 1. Northumbria in Bloom: Britain in Bloom Regional Competition 2015 – Large Town Category: Silver Gilt Award Certificate for Prudhoe

The Awards were presented at a ceremony held in Berwick on Thursday 15 September.

[Members are advised that the Council's 'In Bloom' Sub-Committee is meeting in the near future, and a report from the Group will be brought to a future meeting of the Council]

**It was AGREED to receive the certificate and congratulations were given to Mr Howdon and Mr and Mrs Batey.**

#### 2. Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL): Prudhoe Community Action Plan – Invitation to participate in discussions

Emails dated 4 August and 8 September 2015, from Ian Davison, Project Manager, NWL. "The Prudhoe drainage catchment, including Wylam and Ovingham, has been identified by Northumbrian Water for a Community Action Plan (CAP). The aim of the project is to manage the flood risk within the catchment and meet our customers' expectation of service and care of the environment. I will be managing this project on behalf of Northumbrian Water."

**It was AGREED to arrange a meeting that all Cllrs would be invited to.**

#### 3. North Associates: Proposed Residential Development – Land Adjacent to Eltringham Works, Prudhoe

Letter dated 28 August giving notice of and inviting the Council to a Community Consultation Event, taking place at the Fuse Media Centre on Tuesday 15 September, between 3 and 7 pm. The event was a 'drop-in' session.

Cllrs commented that this was a poor presentation but the developers did show the area included and the houses they were expecting to build. It was AGREED to wait for the formal planning application before commenting any further.

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**4. Northumberland County Council: Petition in Respect of Turners' Funfair – Letter and report to Central Area Committee, NCC**

Letter dated 9 September from Heather Bowers, Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny and Regulatory), NCC. The letter states that the report in respect of the above petition would be considered at the meeting of the NCC Central Area Committee held on 17 September at the Spetchells Centre.

The report of the meeting was tabled which concluded that “Eastwood Park would not be a suitable location to site the town’s funfair...[it]...could compromise sporting activity in the town and prejudice attempts to attract resources to improve playing pitches.”

**It was AGREED to receive the report, the issues had already been discussed at agenda 1516/074.**

**5. Barclays Bank plc: Notice of Changes to Business Current Account**

Letter dated August 2015 from Barclays Bank advising that while the Council has hitherto benefitted from “no charges for making and receiving payments...this is only free for a limited period, and your current arrangements will end on 13 October 2015. From this date you’ll start to be charged for transactions...”

**It was AGREED to receive the information and to continue to look at more efficient banking methods in order to reduce costs.**

**6. Barclays Bank plc: Barclays Business Direct Team (BDT)**

Letter dated 17 September from Anne Davies of the BDT, introducing the new service which is being brought into effect in the Northumberland Tyne & Wear area from 26 October 2015. This will replace the current Business Manager, and will be available from 7am to 8pm Mondays to Fridays.

**It was AGREED to receive the information and to observe service standards, as well as running internet banking for a trial period.**

**7. “Syrian refugees at Prudhoe Hospital site?” – Request for Town Council support**

Email, dated 17 September, from a resident of Prudhoe, as follows:

“Dear Sirs,

You will be aware that the plans of Gentoo to redevelop the Prudhoe Hospital site do not involve demolition of the hospital buildings and building new houses on that part of the area for some years to come. I wondered if it could be possible to use the buildings, or some of them, as a Centre for reception and temporary accommodation for Syrian refugees. I have written to Gentoo to ask this, and to the County Council asking them to get involved also, but would welcome the support of the Town Council too. Having talked to people locally, I know that many are sympathetic to the awful plight of the refugees and would be really pleased to welcome them locally. It would be great if Prudhoe could lead the way in actually doing something practical to help.

I would be really grateful if you don't just dismiss this idea, but seriously investigate whether it's a possibility.

Many thanks”

**It was AGREED to receive the letter and to respond with the County Council contact who was dealing with this as an issue.**

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Undated letter of September 2015 from Mr N Wilkinson, Spatial Development, Gateshead Council, advising of the above consultation. “The Planning Obligations SPD describes Gateshead’s approach to requesting contributions towards infrastructure from developers.

**RECEIVE****9. Northumberland County Council: Aviva Tour of Britain Cycle Race 2015 – “Thank-you” Poster****RECEIVE****10. Northumberland County Council: Road Closure Orders – Mickley**

Two Orders have been received, advising of road closures under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Section 14(1), which are expected to be in force only on **29 October 2015, between 9am and 11am**. This is to allow tree trimming works, requested by Streetwise, to take place. The Orders will be effective along the entire length of (1) the U8282 Eastgate Bank and (2) the U8283 Stonybank Way, with the alternative route in (1) being via Stonybank Way and the A695 and vice versa, and in (2) via Eastgate Bank and the A695 and vice versa: in order words the closures will be consecutive rather than concurrent. **RECEIVE**

**Tabled Items**

1. The National Allotment Society: ‘Allotment & Leisure Gardener’ Issue 3, 2015
2. The Royal Horticultural Society: ‘Grass Roots’ (RHS Community Update), Issue 22, Summer 2015
3. ‘The Yardstick’ – Journal of the British Weights & Measures Association, No. 58, August 2015
4. Society of Local Council Clerks, ‘The Clerk’ Magazine, Vol. 46, No. 5, September 2015
5. Society of Local Council Clerks, Notice of Annual General Meeting, 16 October 2015
6. Clerks & Councils Direct, Issue 101, September 2015
7. Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council: ‘NE43 News’ Issue 55, Autumn 2015
8. Wylam Parish Council: ‘The Wylam Globe’ No. 118, Autumn 2015
9. Tynedale Hospice at Home: ‘Light up a Life – Remembering at Christmas ‘ – details of church services , December 2015 (leaflets and A4 flyer)

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE the tabled items.**