

PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT Minutes of Annual General Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre
at 7:00pm, 25th May 2016

Present

Cllr E Dobson (Chair), Cllr A Gill, Cllr Futers, Cllr G McCreedy, Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert, Cllr A Piper, Cllr A Reid, Cllr Mrs J McGee, Cllr G Price, Cllr G Simpson,

Cllr D Couchman, Cllr Mrs N McGee, Cllr Ms Rose (*arrived at the end of agenda item 1617/003*)

1617/001 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Mrs Eileen Burt, Cllr K Graham, County Cllr Mrs Anne Dale

1617/002 Declarations of Interest None

1617/003 Election of Chair

Cllr Dobson handed over to the administrator to take proceedings. The administrator asked for nominations for the chair's position for the coming year.

Cllr G Simpson proposed Cllr Mrs J McGee; this was seconded by Cllr A Reid.

The administrator asked if there were any further nominations for chair. No further nominations were received.

Cllr Mrs J McGee accepted and was duly elected as Chair of the council. Cllr Mrs J McGee said "I know we will all work together well as we put the town first".

1617/004 Election of Vice Chair

Cllr Mrs J McGee asked for nominations for the Vice Chair's position for the coming year.

Cllr B Futers nominated Cllr G Price; this was seconded by Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert

Cllr Reid re-nominated Cllr E Dobson; this was seconded by Cllr G Simpson.

Cllr Mrs J McGee declared that with two nominations the council would take a vote.

In favour of Cllr G Price – 6 in favour/7 against

In favour of Cllr E Dobson – 7 in favour/6 against

2 nominations so we will take a vote – 6 in favour/7 against

In view of the votes cast, Cllr Ernest Dobson was duly elected as Vice-Chair of the council and accepted the office.

1617/005 Committees, Sub-Committees, and Working Groups 2016-17

a) With reference to agreeing the committees, sub-committees and working groups of the council for the coming year Cllr Gill proposed that the Planning, Contract and Works Committee (PCW) should revert to its original remit when set up, which was to hear only planning applications, that it should drop the 'contracts and works' and be named the 'Planning Committee'. Cllr Gill went on to explain the reasons for his proposal; there is a duplicate of work as items come to the PCW Committee to be agreed and then are received and endorsed at the full council meeting, items are stuck on the PCW Agenda so as not to overburden the Ordinary Meeting and remain un-actioned, decisions on

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Planning Applications are often returned after the closing date whereas a 'Planning Committee' only meeting could meet as and when required.

Cllr Gill recalled the reason the Planning Committee was originally set up, due to the consideration of planning applications taking too long and the Ordinary Meeting finishing too late. However, Cllr Gill suggested that since then more and more has been sidled onto the Planning Committee, thus naming it Planning, Contract and Works Committee and in his opinion dealing with things that should be dealt with by the full council.

Cllr Futers agreed with the points made, acknowledging that decisions take longer under the present remit and often have to come forward to the Ordinary Meeting anyway, defeating the original purpose of hearing them at the PCW Committee. Cllr Futers argued that actions would be agreed and progressed more quickly if they were deal with at the Ordinary Meeting.

Cllr Mrs J McGee referred to Standing Orders and suggested that Cllr Gill should have given advance notice to the chair of this request. Cllr Gill advised that he had discussed it with the office and advised that the Annual General Meeting was the appropriate place to raise the matter.

Cllr Mrs J McGee argued that the reason the PCW Committee was set up was to prevent adjournments as the Ordinary Meeting was going on too long. Cllrs Mrs J McGee and Cllr G Simpson reported that the PCW Committee has the power to make decisions that do not exceed the spending limit of £2,500.

Cllr Reid suggested that at the present moment there were few plans being received but this could change and it would be difficult to include planning application, if received on mass, in the Ordinary Meeting agenda. Cllr Reid said he had no problem with the proposal to look at the remit. Cllr Simpson agreed but commented that the PCW Committee did give Cllrs more opportunity for debate than the Ordinary Meeting.

It was **AGREED** to add review of Planning, Contract and Works Committee to the next agenda of the council

Proposed: Cllr A Gill

Seconded: Cllr B Futers

b) Those members **AGREED** to be appointed to committees, sub-committees and working groups are attached at APPENDIX A.

On the Planning, Contract and Works Committee Cllrs Mrs J McGee replaced Cllr Mrs E Burt as ex officio and Cllr E Dobson remained as ex-officio. Other members were re-appointed with one vacancy.

Cllr Mrs J McGee proposed that Cllr Ms J Rose be appointed to the PCW Committee; this was seconded by Cllr C Cuthbert.

Cllr Gill proposed that Cllr A Piper be appointed to the PCW Committee in view that he attended most meetings; this was seconded by Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert.

Cllr Mrs J Rose was appointed to the Planning, Contract and Works Committee with 8 votes in favour and 2 against.

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On the Human Resources Committee Cllrs Mrs J McGee replaced Cllr Mrs E Burt as ex officio and Cllr E Dobson remained as ex-officio. Other members were re-appointed.

On the Cemetery and War Memorial Sub-Committee Cllr B Futers resigned stating that he found it difficult to attend daytime meetings. Cllrs Mrs J McGee thanked Cllr Futers for his valuable input and was sorry that he was leaving the committee. There were no forthcoming volunteers for this committee; Cllr Reid nominated Cllr Mrs Burt in her absence. Cllr Mrs Burt was appointed.

On the Town Events Sub-Committee Cllr G McCreedy, Cllr A Gill and Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert resigned. Cllrs Mrs J McGee thanked all Cllrs for their hard work and said they would indeed be hard act to follow. Cllr Reid put himself forward, as did Cllr Dobson, Cllr Reid nominated Cllr Mrs Burt in her absence. Cllrs Reid, Dobson and Mrs Burt were appointed to the Town Events Sub-Committee.

Cllr G Price was added to the Young People's Forum, although it was acknowledged that all Cllrs are invited to attend.

As Chair, Cllr Mrs J McGee replaced Cllr Mrs Burt on the Allotment Liaison Group.

It was **AGREED** to look at ways to make the Legal Affairs Working Group more effective.

Cllr Price succeeded Cllr Mrs J McGee as chair of the Prudhoe Neighbourhood Management Group and it was **AGREED** that efforts should be made to ensure the group meets at least quarterly.

It was **AGREED** that the Street Scene Working Group needed to meet more regularly.

All appointments are given at APPENDIX A with changes in bold text.

1617/006 Representatives on Outside Bodies 2016-17

The list of outside bodies for which the town council are represented was **AGREED** with the addition of the 'Parish Council and NCC Liaison Group' and the 'Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership'.

Those Cllrs representing the town council are given at APPENDIX B, along with the frequency of meetings.

It was also **AGREED** to contact the Green Infrastructure Group to ask if any meetings have been held and if these could be notified to the Town Council.

1617/007 Standing Orders of Council

Cllr Reid suggested that the Standing Orders should be fine-tuned to reflect the council's working practice rather than having a model document. The administrator advised that the Standing Orders presented were a 'fine-tuned' document that was amended last year, from the 'model' Standing Orders. Cllr Reid proposed that the council look at them again in the run up to the 2017 Annual General Meeting.

Cllr Gill asked if it was the Standing Orders that applied the 'one question' ruling. Cllr Simpson said it was as well as speaking for no longer than five minutes. Cllr Gill supported Cllr Reid's proposal.

It was AGREED to re-adopt the Standing Orders of the Council.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert

Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

1617/008 Financial Regulations and Responsible Financial Officer

Cllr Reid reported that when the Financial Regulations Group met on Monday 16th May they agreed a number of recommendations that are presented in the report; however that on reflection and in view of not being aware of the full facts that he would like to agree everything except appointing Sarah Eden as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

Cllr Futers enquired why the report was being presented with recommendations if Cllr Reid did not agree with the recommendations, and was he not part of the group the made the recommendations. Cllr Reid responded that he was at the meeting and at the time did agree to the recommendations but now believes it would be wrong appoint Sarah Eden as RFO when the post is presently held by the Clerk, who is not there to agree or otherwise.

The administrator raised a point of order that Cllr Reid was misrepresenting the facts, that she had completed a review of the Financial Regulations in February, that the Clerk was well aware of, and that the recommendations contained in that report were supported and agreed by the clerk before coming to the Cllrs of the Financial Regulations Group. Cllr Reid stated that the Administrator had no right to raise a point of order; the administrator replied that what was being said was inaccurate and standing orders allowed for this. Cllr Simpson stated that this applied to Cllrs.

Cllr Reid stated that he was not saying the decision was incorrect but that the details should be checked with the Clerk first, on his return to work, as he was not aware that the Clerk supported the recommendations. The administrator stated that she had explained to the Financial Regulations Meeting that the Clerk did support the recommendations.

Cllrs Mrs J McGee asked Cllr Ms Rose and Cllr Price if they knew that the Clerk supported the recommendations. Cllr Price stated "I am not clear whether Richard is aware that we are going in this direction."

Cllr Rose said "If there is a matter of doubt, we should wait."

Cllr Mrs J McGee stated that it should have come up at the meeting that Richard was agreeable to the recommendations; Cllr Simpson agreed that if Richard was not privy to the recommendations they should not be made.

The administrator stated that the meeting was made aware that the clerk supported the recommendations and that the original report was dated February. Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert stated that was clear on the footnote of the report.

Cllr Gill asked who did the work of the RFO. Cllr Dobson suggested that this was getting into a discussion about employee's responsibilities and it was not appropriate.

Cllr Gill questioned why the item on the table was in the first place and suggested it be deferred.

It was **AGREED** to defer the item.

1617/009 Internal Audit

It was AGREED to receive the Internal Audit Report written by Mr Peter Basnett and to re-appoint Mr Basnett for the present financial year 2016/17. The council were not required to agree any further actions as no issues had been raised.

Proposed: Cllr G Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Ms J Rose

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1617/010 Minutes of Ordinary Meeting, held on 27th April 2016

Cllr Reid asked for an amendment on a matter of accuracy on page 5. **It was AGREED** to remove 'it was AGREED to look into how the council could set up an inter-parish petition'.

It was AGREED to receive the minutes as a true record (with the above amendment)

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr A Gill

1617/011 Matters Arising

Cllr Mrs McGee advised that the clerk had responded to NCC regarding the capital scheme funding allocated for Eastwood Park (£15,000) from Cllr Reid and for a new entrance at Highfield Park (£5,000) from Cllr Mrs Burt and that the next step would be to agree projects and seek quotations.

Cllr Mrs J McGee asked the Administrator to update the meeting on progress with respect to agreeing a meeting regarding the Play Areas planned for the south of Eastwood Park. The Administrator confirmed that emails had been exchanged but no course of action had been agreed. **It was AGREED** to make further attempts to progress this.

1617/012 Report of Planning Contract & Works Committee Meeting held on 11th May 2016

It was AGREED to receive the report

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

1617/013 Accounts 2016/17

a) **It was AGREED** to approve the bank reconciliation 1st April – 9th May 2016

Proposed: Cllr G Simpson

Seconded: Cllr A Gill

It was AGREED to show the payment to Prudhoe Community Partnership separate to Grant Aid payments in the bank reconciliation.

b) **It was AGREED** to approve the Statement of Expenditure from 1st April 2016 to 19th May 2016

Proposed: Cllr A Gill

Seconded: Cllr A Reid

The administrator advised that there was a new pink copy of the Budget as the income for Highfield Park from the Housing Developer funding should not have been recorded as income in the 2016/17 budget. Although received in this financial year, the funds were used to off-set the budget and are not new income in budget terms.

c) **It was AGREED** to authorise the payment of the accounts received since the last meeting and to endorse those already paid (schedule tabled)

Proposed: Cllr A Reid

Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

1617/014 Additional Balances

It was AGREED to receive the explanatory report on additional balances reported in April, and place the additional money in contingency.

Proposed: Cllr A Reid

Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

1617/015 Town Council Insurance

It was AGREED to receive the summary of premium for 2016/17, and endorse payment of the invoice.

Cllr Reid questioned why an increase in salaries would have any effect on the council's insurance premium. The administrator explained that the amount of any payment for an employment related dispute, accident, illness, etc. is all calculated according to salary and therefore as salaries increase as do premiums.

1617/016 Core Strategy

It was AGREED to receive the response from MP Guy Opperman

Both Cllrs McCreedy and Gill asked if the Walled Garden Group had ever approached the council for support. Cllr Mrs J McGee responded that if they had, it would have been placed on the agenda for action to be agreed, adding that she was the council's representative on the Green Infrastructure Group but that no meetings had been held that she was aware of.

Cllr Reid said that he was surprised by the response regarding the Core Strategy, suggesting that the council have innocently asked for support against a controversial planning decision at Highfield and that he Mr Opperman has effectively kicked it back to the County Councillors to attack their position. Cllr Reid stated that the Core Strategy comes from Central Government and therefore it is up to him as a lead whip to represent the views of the public. Cllr Mrs J McGee agreed that the letter was sent on behalf of the people of Prudhoe, not just from the council. Cllr McCreedy added that if Mr Opperman could give even just a fraction of the support given to Ponteland that would be appreciated.

It was AGREED to send a response to MP Guy Opperman expressing disappointment at his lack of support, as well as to advise that no request has come to the town council from the Walled Garden Group.

1617/017 Reports from outside bodies

Prudhoe Community Partnership - Cllr Reid advised that a new chair had been appointed. Cllr McCreedy advised that this was George Hepburn. Cllr McCreedy stated that the Windsor Bakery was expected to be demolished in April and it was now coming to the end of May, he asked when this would be carried out. Cllr Reid advised that it was imminent.

Northumberland County Council – Cllr Reid advised that the Core Strategy is the main issue at present, which he had only just received a copy of the section on Prudhoe as the full document was 900 pages. There would be a consultation between 15th June and 27th July and he expected Prudhoe would be visited.

SCA Community Forum – Cllr Price gave a report of the meeting held on 28th April 2016 attended by councillors from Ovingham, Wylam and Stocksfield, the Plant Manager, Engineering Manager and PR Consultant.

- SCA have 34 apprentices; 24 technical, 7 processing and 1 business. A further 11 will begin in September along with 3 graduates. SCA are developing higher education courses with Newcastle and Northumbria University and local graduate recruitment schemes. They retain 85% of appointments and have spent over £75,000 over 4 years.
- Capital spending in 2016 was £13.5 million; £7million on equipment and new products, £2million on buildings, £3million buying the warehouse that was previously rented and £1.5million on a new fleet of fork lift trucks. SCA lost £300,000 when Unifibres flooded.
- SCA was awarded nationally for Ethical Standards. *Among the local initiatives they have supported are:*
 - Sending 10 apprentices to help clean and repair Ovingham Scout Hut.
 - Sponsoring the strips of Prudhoe Youth Football Club - £700.

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- 3 staff raised £1,800 for Cancer Research.
- Provided Prudhoe West First School with safety jackets for walking to and from school.
- £1,000 to Sport Tynedale and sponsorship of the 'Unsung Hero' award that was presented to Rob Archer who saved Riding Mill Tennis Club from closure. Riding Mill Tennis Club has an entry in the Paralympics.
- Newcastle and Gateshead Food Banks

Future support will be in the form of:

- The SCA Prudhoe Miner's Race
- Land of Oak and Iron Project with respect to the local environment and children's education.
- Apprentices are set to join the Spetchells Conservation Group who are working to remove harmful species of plant life from the top of the Spetchells to ensure wildlife continues to thrive.
- Considering request for £4,000 towards a bus shelter at Ovingham.

SCA has indicated they would be supportive of any submission for a bridge from Low Prudhoe to the A69. There is also interest in contributing towards a flowerbed on one of the roundabouts on the A695, this is presently being costed.

1617/018 Correspondence and Publications

Correspondence

1. Resident Email expressing concerns about parking on Front Street, with respect to double-yellow lines, on pavements, dentist, bank and chemist. Requests more stringent action.

Administrator has written to the resident to outline that parking is the responsibility of NCC, and Police when safety is concerned, but resident wished for the correspondence to be heard formally. Sent to County Cllrs.

It was **AGREED** to convene a meeting of the Street Scene Group and to bring this matter forward for discussion.

Cllr Piper added that although NCCC had re-painted double-yellow lines throughout Prudhoe, there was no additional parking for those with disabilities. Cllr Mrs J McGee suggested that this could also come to the Street Scene Group for discussion. The Administrator advised that following Cllr Pipers suggestions about parking bays, the council had already proposed places on Front Street for additional disabled bays. It was **AGREED** to follow this up.

2. Local Transport Programme 2016/17

It was **AGREED** to receive the document.

3. Consultation on Street Naming and Numbering at former Prudhoe Hospital

Street names have not actually been suggested, however the name put forward for the Estate/Development is **Cottier Grange**. It was **AGREED** to receive the letter, no objections were noted.

4. NCC – Parish Double Charging (Cemetery)

It was **AGREED** to receive the confirmation of refund at £757.18

5. NCC Strategic Planning Site Visit, land south of South Row

It was **AGREED** to receive the letter and note that the date had passed.

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6. St. Matthew's Primary School thank you letter for the £500 cheque for sports equipment as part of 2015 Miners Race entry competition. New equipment is being enjoyed by all. It was **AGREED** to receive the letter.

7. Centenary Fields letter outlining a programme that joins 'Fields in Trust' with the Royal British Legion, as part of the WWI Centenary; this is to protect and commemorate 'green space' in the name of those who died in WWI, supported by the Duke of Cambridge. The letter seeks potential playing fields and other green spaces that could be protected and commemorated in Prudhoe.

It was **AGREED** to receive the letter and place this on the next Ordinary Meeting agenda.

Tabled Items

1. Mitry-Mory – L'évolution – municipal information magazine for Mitry-Mory, April and May 2016
2. NAMM – April 2016
3. Clerks & Councils Direct magazine, May 2016
4. NE43 – Stocksfield Spring Newsletter

1617/019 Pre-application presentation regarding Front Street Development and Low Prudhoe Development

It was **AGREED** to hear this as an emergency item

It was **AGREED** that Cllr Piper and Cllr Dobson would attend the presentation on Tuesday 7th June from 1:15pm.

To approve a motion, that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public be excluded for consideration of the following items, in accordance with Section 68 of the Council's Standing Orders:-

1617/019 Personnel and Standards Committee

It was **AGREED** to receive the report of the meeting held on 4th April 2016 that was not received at the April Ordinary Meeting.

It was **AGREED** to receive the report of the meeting held on 16th May.

It was **AGREED** to endorse that the Administrators contract be increased to full-time, 37 hours/week.

Cllr Reid asked that the 'Time of in lieu' Policy include the recommendation that only a maximum of 15 hours can be carried forward from one month to the next. This was **AGREED**.

Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert asked if the record could be amended as she did not refer to the 'Personnel and Standards Committee' only the Personnel Committee and was not aware where 'standards' had come from. It was **AGREED** to amend the record and to agree to rename the 'Personnel Committee', the 'Human Resources Committee'.

Cllr Gill asked why opening hours that are shorter than the working day had been proposed. Cllr Reid advised that the group had an indication that this may be broached and as such had agreed to alter opening hours to 9:30am until 4:00pm. Cllr Reid expressed the suggestion was made in the interest of the officers getting substantive work done without being interrupted by members of the public.

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Cllr Gill argued that everything else in The Spetchells Centre opens at 9am and he could see no reason why the council office should be different. Cllr Mrs Cuthbert suggested that the office is not open at 9am and that is why the suggestion has been made. Cllr Futers supported the idea put forward by the committee as a means of allowing the staff to get on with work.

It was formally proposed that Office Opening Hours are publicised as 9:30am until 4:00pm. 13 in favour/1 against. Cllr Gill asked for his vote against to be recorded.

It was **AGREED** to state that Office Opening Hours are 9:30am until 4:00pm

Cllr Gill asked if the 'Working Hours' Policy could include a stipulation that lunch breaks be taken between 12 noon – 2:00pm to avoid the office being left unattended during 'opening hours'. It was **AGREED**.

It was AGREED to receive and endorse the draft policy on 'Working Hours and Time off in Lieu' (with the amendments noted above).

It was AGREED to receive and endorse the draft policy on 'Time off work for Public Duties'

Cllr Dobson reminded Cllrs that there would be formal consultation with staff before commencing with changes to the terms and conditions of employment, following which a period of notice would be given.

1617/020 Bus Shelter (B6396 Prudhoe Golf Club)

It was AGREED to offer the work to repair the bus shelter opposite Prudhoe Hall Drive to SW Watson Builders.

It was also AGREED to request the cost to paint the timber of this repair and the previous repair carried out on the shelter opposite Waterworld.

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APPENDIX A

Outside Body	PTC Representative
Prudhoe Town Twinning Association	Cllr Mrs E Burt
NCC Area Committee – Central (relating to Prudhoe)	This is a public meeting
NCC Area Committee – West (relating to Mickley)	This is a public meeting
Prudhoe Community Partnership	Cllr Mrs E Burt
Northumberland Association of Local Councils	Cllr E Dobson (bi-monthly meetings)
Friends of Prudhoe Woods	VACANCY
East Tynedale Local Councils Forum	Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert (quarterly meetings)
SCA Hygiene Community Consultation Forum	Cllr G Price (half-yearly meetings)
Prudhoe Pathforce	Cllr Ms J Rose (bi-monthly meetings)
Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) East Tynedale Find out what is going on!	Cllr Ms J Rose Cllr G McCreedy (bi-monthly meetings)
Green Infrastructure Group	Cllr Mrs J McGee
Parish Council and NCC Liaison Group	Cllr E Dobson
Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership	Cllr G Price (monthly meetings)

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APPENDIX B

Planning, Contracts and Works Committee	Human Resources Committee	Cemetery & War Memorial Sub-Committee	Town Events Sub-Committee
Cllr Mrs J McGee (ex officio) Cllr E Dobson (ex officio) Cllr G Simpson Cllr A Gill Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert Cllr G McCreedy Cllr G Price Cllr B Futers Cllr Mrs N McGee Cllr Ms J Rose	Cllr Mrs J McGee (ex officio) Cllr E Dobson (ex officio) Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert Cllr G Price Cllr A Reid	Cllr A Gill (Chair) Cllr A Piper Cllr Ms J Rose Cllr Mrs J McGee Cllr Mrs E Burt	Cllr Mrs J McGee (Chair) Cllr Mrs N McGee Cllr T Reid Cllr Mrs E Burt Cllr E Dobson All Cllrs invited
In Bloom Sub-Committee	PTC Young People's Forum	Legal Affairs Working Group	Allotment Management Liaison Meeting
Cllr Mrs N McGee (Chair) Cllr Mrs J McGee All Cllrs invited	Cllr Mrs J McGee Cllr G McCreedy Cllr G Price All Cllrs invited	Cllr Mrs J McGee Cllr Mrs E Burt Cllr A Gill	Cllr Mrs J McGee (Chair) All Cllrs invited
Prudhoe Neighbourhood Management Group	Civic and Community Forum	Street Scene Working Group	
Cllr G Price (Chair) All Cllrs invited	Cllr Mrs E Burt (Chair) Public Forum	Cllr Mrs J McGee Cllr B Futers Cllr Mrs N McGee Cllr A Piper Cllr Ms Rose	