



Date: Wednesday 6th September 2017

RE: The East Centre

Dear Members of Prudhoe Town Council

As some/all of you may be aware. A group of four parents have setup a new playgroup called Prudhoe Poppets within Prudhoe, operating out of The East Centre. This is a not for profit organisation which asks for a donation of £1 per family per session. The playgroup has been setup up to support families with children aged between 0-13 years of age and runs weekly on a Friday between 10 am – 2pm.

The parents identified that there is a lack of community based activities aimed at this age range of children within Prudhoe. This is especially the case during the school holidays when families with more than one child of different ages have nowhere to attend “ together “. The activities offered are aimed at all ages between 0 – 13.

The parents have setup Prudhoe Poppets in co-operation with the staff of The East Centre who have been supportive throughout the process. What has concerned the parents is the lack of support for the East Centre and its staff to provide activities for all ages of children. The Sure Start Centre has been supportive in the setting up of the playgroup from the infant/toddler point of view.

Outlines of the parents' concerns in relation to the East Centre is as follows:

- Two of the parents involved attended The East Centre when they were younger and have stated that the centre has not changed since they have left and there appears to be neglect in relation to the buildings maintenance and standard of occupancy. Some of the neglect is as follows:
 - Roof Slates appearing to be loose on the roof and laid on the floor
 - Water running through the outside space without effective drainage.
 - Basic maintenance issues of electrical sockets not working, kitchen draws broken and broke taps.
 - General Health and Safety throughout the building / outside areas
- During our time setting up and operating Prudhoe Poppets the staff of The East Centre have indicated that they have raised concerns over the centre but these have gone unheard for many years and the staff appear to be demoralised over the lack of support.

- The teenagers/young adults who attend the centre outside of Prudhoe Poppets appear to have little or no respect for either the facilities, the staff or the building. This in our opinion is due to the lack of support/investment for both the staff and the East Centre itself to provide both a suitably maintained space and engaging activities for the teenagers/young adults who attend.

As parents of children that are the next generation to be growing up in Prudhoe we are passionate to ensure that similar opportunities are available for our children, that we enjoyed when we were growing up. We have achieved in a short space of time the ability to support activities for the children however this can only go so far and without outside support for the children of Prudhoe it will not succeed.

As parents, we have also noticed that some of the existing child friendly areas and activities within Prudhoe are also being neglected or even discontinued. Examples of this are as follows:

- The playgrounds in Prudhoe appear to have been neglected with missing patches of protective flooring and play equipment that no longer works.
- The creche scheme at Prudhoe Waterworld that made use of the softplay has been scaled down from what is used to be reducing access to the sports centre facilities to all who wish to use the centre with children.
- The sure start centre appears to have stopped what we feel were successful activities.

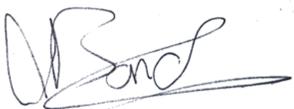
All of this has reduced the activities available to both child and parents within Prudhoe.

During the setting up of the Prudhoe Poppets the support from both the public and business communities has been unbelievable, showing that there is support within the community for children/youth activities within the Prudhoe and wider area community. As a group we feel that channelling this community support through the East Centre would be great, however it also requires the support from both the Town Council and County Council.

We would like to have a representative attend your next meeting on the 27th September to further discuss our concerns in relation to The East Centre and understand whether the Town Council has any input into the running or maintenance of the East Centre. From that point it would be a case of what support the Town Council are willing to provide in getting the East Centre back to where it should be and supporting the younger generation within the Prudhoe community.

We look forward to you allowing us to talk at your next meeting.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alastair Bond', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Alastair Bond

Representative of Prudhoe Poppets.