

PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

**DRAFT Minutes of Planning, Contract & Works Committee, including Extraordinary Item
held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 10th January 2018**

PRESENT

Cllr Gerry Price (Chair), Cllr Tracy Gilmore, Cllr Andy Gill, Cllr G Robinson, Cllr Angie Scott, Cllr Russ Greig, Cllr Yvonne Ritchie, Cllr Glenn Simpson, Cllr Jennifer McGee, Cllr Chris Cuthbert

County Cllr Anne Dale

1718/P064 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Ignasious Varghese, Cllr Eileen Burt, Cllr Duncan Couchman

1718/P065 Declarations of Interest

None

1718/P066 Councillor George McCreedy: Declaration of Vacancy

Cllr Gerry Price read out the letter he had sent to George McCreedy over the Christmas period, following receipt of his resignation.

Cllr Gerry Price confirmed that the administrator had followed the laid down procedure and informed the elections office of the vacancy and **it was AGREED** to post the vacancy as required.

The acting clerk advised that the Town Council should find out on 31st January if a poll has been called.

1718/P067 Report of the Planning, Contract and Works Committee Meeting held on 8th November 2017

Cllr Jennifer McGee asked for the report to be amended on page 6 as it incorrectly stated she advised the meeting about the petition for a skate park at Eastwood Park and this was not the case. The administrator advised that she would go back to Tracey Green, the minute taker, with this amendment.

It was AGREED to RECEIVE the minutes as a true record with the above amendment.

Proposed: Cllr Jennifer McGee

Seconded: Cllr Glenn Simpson

1718/P068 Matters Arising

1718/P058 Seats and Bins

The administrator advised that these would be dealt with in the budget meeting.

1718/P059 Request for Bus Shelter

The administrator advised that County Cllr Ken Stow had responded positively and was willing to share the cost of purchasing and installing a bus shelter at stop travelling west opposite Eltringham Bank, with the Town Council.

1718/P069 Planning Matters**a) Planning Applications**

Prudhoe Hall Ward

45 Front Street

[17/04050/FUL](#)

Installation of x3 dormer windows to rear elevation and proposed loft conversion.

Paul Stangroom

Support

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Halfway Ward**7 Edgewell Grange**[17/04486/FUL](#)

Construction of first floor side extension to create two bedrooms over existing garage.

Michelle Humphries**SUPPORT****Castle & Eltringham Ward****32 Rowan Grove**[17/04600/FUL](#)

Single storey extensions to front. Side and rear.

Mrs Rachel Towns**SUPPORT****Mickley Ward****Land South West and North East of Mickley Moor Farm, Hedley**[17/04619/FUL](#)

1 no. agricultural worker's dwelling

Ridley**SUPPORT****b) Planning Decisions**

The following planning decisions were received:

Castledene & Eltringham Ward**32 Rowan Grove, Prudhoe, NE42 6PP**[17/03833/FUL](#)

Two storey extension to side, single storey extension over garage. Single storey extensions to front and rear.

Rachel Towns**NCC REFUSED****Castledene & Eltringham Ward****5 Lime Grove, Prudhoe, NE42 6PR**[17/04081/FUL](#)

Construction of two-storey side extension, single-storey rear extension and proposed front porch

Stephen Richardson**NCC GRANTED****West Wylam Ward****56 Rolley Way, Castlefields, Prudhoe, NE42 5FH**[17/03924/FUL](#)

Construction of single-storey side and rear extension with proposed brick garden.

Mr Humble**NCC GRANTED****West Wylam Ward****Cricket Pavilion, Eastwood Park, Eastwood Wood, West Wylam, NE42 5DX**[17/03866/FUL](#)

Single storey side extension to existing sports pavilion building to provide additional home and away changing rooms, officials changing rooms and associated W/C's and showers. Alterations to existing sports pavilion to provide larger kitchen/stores, seating and viewing area and accessible WC.

Connor Phillips**NCC GRANTED**

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Castlefields and Low Prudhoe Ward **22 Masters Crescent, Prudhoe, NE42 6NT**
17/03720/FUL

Construction of two storey side extension and single storey rear extension.

Jon Stanbury

WITHDRAWN BY APPLICANT

STILL OUTSTANDING

The following planning applications were advised as being outstanding:

Prudhoe Hall Ward **78 Redwell Road, Prudhoe, Northumberland, NE42 5AF**
17/04054/FUL

Application for full planning permission to construct 2 bedroom bungalow.

Mr Tony Webber

Prudhoe Hall Ward **5 Fern Close, Prudhoe, Northumberland, NE42 5PL**
17/04076/FUL

Proposed 2-storey extension and canopy over ground floor aspect and door opening.

Miss Alison Timlin

Castledene Ward **Land West of 144 Western Avenue, Prudhoe Northumberland**
17/04251/OUT

Single dwelling and parking

Shenstone Properties Ltd

Castlefields and Low Prudhoe Ward **Prudhoe Railway Station**
17/03738/LBC

Listed Building consent: Proposed installation of replacement ticket vending machine to Platform 1, new ticket vending machine to platform 2 and installation of CCTV.

Northern Railways

1718/138 Eastwood Park Meeting

Cllr Gerry Price advised the meeting that as confirmed in the previous item, planning matters, the planning application for the Cricket Pavilion initiated by Prudhoe Youth Club Football Club (PYCFC) had been approved.

Cllr Glenn Simpson commented with regards to the issue of dogs being banned from Eastwood Park and the truth of the current situation on the sports field. Cllr Glenn Simpson stated that it was fair enough for NCC to say 'encourage dog owners to be responsible' but ignored in reality.

Cllr Graham Robinson agreed and acknowledged that as someone involved with football he could confirm that picking up after other people's dogs was one of the jobs prior to a match, like putting up the nets and it was a very sad state of affairs and very dangerous for players.

Cllrs Yvonne Ritchie and Tracy Gilmore offered that the issue of dog fouling was throughout the town and more education and enforcement were necessary. Cllr Yvonne Ritchie suggested a publicity campaign to encourage responsibility and spray painting that had been used to effect in other areas.

Cllr Chris Cuthbert asked if the summary points at the end had been followed up and whose actions they were. It was confirmed that this was for NCC to take forward.

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Cllr Jennifer McGee advised that there would be a follow-up meeting and as there was funding left over from the play area, it was expected that picnic tables and the MUGA could be prioritised.

Cllr Russ Greig advised that he had met on-site with County Cllr Gordon Stewart, Mike Jeffrey, Geoff Cant and Sam Talbot to speak to them about a project for the Bowls Pavilion and at that meeting, it was mentioned about re-lining the tennis courts.

Cllr Russ Greig also advised that Mike Jeffrey had suggested they could sell some of the land to Prudhoe Golf Club to which he had responded with appal that they would consider selling an area of this community park. Cllr Russ Greig stated that he would wholeheartedly oppose any such action.

Cllr Andy Gill responded that the land belonged to NCC and they were at will to do as they please with it.

Cllr Russ Greig also warned that in respect of the fencing around the play area, this was complete, but he was concerned that x4 large trees, previously outside the play area boundary, were now within it. It was discussed that this would be an additional cost to the Town Council when the play area was transferred as the trees were old and likely to need felling and the Town Council should be sure exactly what it was taking on. Cllr Yvonne Ritchie suggested the Town Council should ask for them to be removed prior to any transfer.

It was AGREED that a follow-up meeting was required.

1718/139 Banning Dogs - Highfield Park and Edgewell Cemeteries

Cllr Gerry Price made clear that this item had been brought back to the Town Council table to ensure that all serving Cllrs were aware of the rules relating to banning dogs from public spaces as it was clear that the Town Council had no authority to do so but had taken action to put up signs and ban dogs from both Edgewell Cemeteries and Highfield Park.

Cllr Jennifer McGee responded that the issue had been investigated by the Clerk, Richard Whinney and that it was discussed at length and although it was agreed that it was difficult to enforce it was agreed to follow through with the ban. Cllr Jennifer McGee stated that if the signs are removed, then people will think that it is okay to take dogs in, they will be exercised and they won't pick up after them. Cllr Jennifer McGee also described separate incidents at Highfield Park involving dogs and young children that had serious repercussions.

The administrator made clear that it was not that banning dogs from these public spaces was 'difficult to enforce' it was that it could not be enforced as only a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) can ban dogs from public areas and this is not in force in these areas. The administrator went on to state that only the unitary authority could make such an order and they were reluctant as has been described in the notes of the meeting about Eastwood Park. The administrator reiterated that the Town Council could put up signs if they chose to, as they had, but that there was no legal enforcement of this; the only enforcement in relation to dogs in the Cemetery and Highfield Park is that they must be kept on a lead and owners must pick up after them.

Cllr Gerry Price asked if the general feeling was that if the Town Council removed the signs it would open up problems and therefore they should remain until challenged.

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Cllr Russ Greig suggested that having the signs in the first place suggested the Town Council had the authority to ban dogs and he believed that it would make the Town Council look bad if they were left until challenged.

Cllr Chris Cuthbert asked if the signs could be reworded so as politely request that dogs are not taken into the cemetery.

Cllr Andy Gill offered that the Town Council should do what is required to legally ban dogs from these places.

Cllr Glenn Simpson agreed that the Town Council should pursue a legal ban.

Cllr Russ Greig asked if there was an issue with dog fouling in Edgewell Cemetery prior to the signs being put up. Cllr Andy Gill responded that the Town Council were advised by the cemetery attendant that it was and there was even an incident on someone's grave.

Cllr Andy Gill proposed that the Town Council leave the signs as they are and apply to NCC for Edgewell Cemeteries and Highfield Park to be included in the PSPO; **this was seconded by Cllr Jennifer McGee.**

A vote was taken. 8 in favour, 2 against.

Cllr Yvonne Ritchie proposed that the Town Council change the signs to discourage dogs from Edgewell Cemeteries and Highfield Park, but that they still apply to NCC for the areas to be included in the PSPO, **this was seconded by Cllr Russ Greig.**

A vote was taken. 2 in favour, 7 against, 1 abstention.

1718/140 Town Signs – County Councillors Capital Small Schemes Funding

It was discussed that the signs in the town are many and varied and Cllr Glenn Simpson recalled that not too long ago NCC considered that there were too many signs in the town.

Cllr Yvonne Ritchie described the confusion on the B6395 travelling from the east as there is a sign that indicates you have entered Prudhoe, Northumberland just past Stanley Burn, and then another after Cottier Grange saying welcome to Prudhoe. Cllr Jennifer McGee responded that the Welcome to Prudhoe sign was installed by the Town Council as part of a black and gold theme.

It was AGREED to request a meeting with County Cllrs Gordon Stewart and Ken Stow about the proposed signage.

1718/141 Extraordinary Item - NCC Youth Service Provision in Prudhoe

It was **AGREED** to receive the report of the meeting held at County Hall with Cath McEvoy (NCC Executive Director of Children's Services), Sharron Pearson (NCC Senior Manager Specialist Services) and Councillor Wayne Daley (Deputy Leader and Children's Services). Cllr Gerry Price thanked the administrator for the report which he acknowledged would have been difficult to record.

Cllr Gerry Price stated that what came out of the meeting was somewhat of a delayed position as they await the results of the review of the Youth Service throughout the whole of Northumberland. Cllr Gerry Price confirmed that NCC was unable to commit themselves until the review was complete but also that in some areas they were not informed what was or was not taking place in the East Centre. Cllr Gerry Price concluded that the review was due in the New Year and the meeting followed a general conversation about the Town Council's concerns and reassurance that NCC

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would be taking some kind of involvement once the review is complete and until that time, everything is academic.

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 item, in accordance with Section 68 of the Council's Standing Orders:-

1718/142 CONFIDENTIAL - The East Centre Feasibility Report

Prior to discussing the Feasibility Report, Cllr Yvonne Ritchie questioned why it should be received as a confidential item. Cllr Graham Robinson agreed that he also felt uncomfortable that this was not in the public domain.

Cllr Gerry Price stated that Prudhoe Community Partnership had marked the report confidential and the Town Council was required to take a decision about whether if this asset was available they would want to take it on.

The administrator clarified that although the Feasibility Report was being received as a confidential item under section 68, the ensuing discussion and decision would be in the public domain.

The summary recommendations of the report are:

- *The East Centre site and buildings can continue to be a base for the Youth Service and for wider community projects under the management of a suitable community led body.*
- *The proposed Community Asset Transfer the East Centre is both feasible and deliverable subject to an appropriate funding package being developed and agreed.*
- *Both Prudhoe Town Council and Prudhoe Community Partnership meet the criteria set out in the NCC policy for a Community Asset Transfer, however, it is suggested that their collaboration results in a more robust and sustainable solution for the East Centre.*

It was AGREED to receive the Feasibility Report

Proposed: Cllr Glenn Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Jennifer McGee

Cllr Gerry Price advised that although the trustees of Prudhoe Community Partnership are not expected to meet until 16th January to agree a formal view, following an informal discussion after the report was presented, Chairman George Hepburn wished to advise the Town Council of their likely position.

In summary, the email indicated that they agreed with all the recommendations of the report except that we would prefer to deal directly with the County Council over an asset transfer rather than the transfer being to the Town Council and then leased to Prudhoe Community Partnership, as it seemed a simpler, cheaper and quicker way to achieve community ownership.

Cllr Jennifer McGee commended the work of the consultant involved and stated that she was impressed with the final Feasibility Report and recommendations. Cllr Jennifer McGee described that there were a number of Cllrs present when the Feasibility Report was jointly received by Prudhoe Town Council and Prudhoe Community Partnership and it has come as no surprise to her that Prudhoe Community Partnership would prefer to deal directly with Northumberland County Council, removing the Town Council as the most local level of democracy from discussions. Cllr Jennifer McGee continued that Prudhoe Community Partnership is interested in putting houses on some of the site and she believed there would be a conflict between users; Tony Dodds agreed.

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Cllr Jennifer McGee stated that whereas Prudhoe Community Partnership could apply for a leasehold agreement, the Town Council could apply for freehold, this was also the preferred option stated by the consultant. Cllr Jennifer McGee concluded that she had been pleased with the recommendation that Prudhoe Town Council and Prudhoe Community Partnership could work together, but that the Chair, George Hepburn had made it clear he would prefer Prudhoe Community Partnership to take it on themselves as it would be difficult to work in partnership with the Town Council. Cllr Jennifer McGee said she was very disappointed.

Cllr Chris Cuthbert responded that having been involved in the meetings of the working group from the outset, the informal position of Prudhoe Community Partnership was no surprise.

Cllr Graham Robinson explained that the East Centre is community building and as such its future should be governed and managed in the interest of the community and as a Town Council they are best placed to do that as they are accountable to the public, Prudhoe Community Partnership is not.

Cllr Jennifer McGee advised that the reason Prudhoe Town Council raised concerns in January 2017, about the proposed sale of the building was to protect the presence of the youth service, advising that if Prudhoe Town Council did not get a grip of this the youth element of the East Centre would diminish. Cllr Jennifer McGee stated that the Town Council can set aside money in its budget to take this forward and can build a business plan to make it happen.

Cllr Yvonne Ritchie agreed and said she would have concerns if the council were not involved. Cllr Yvonne Ritchie questioned point 5.7 of the report that stated:

Prudhoe Town Council is less suitable as an asset manager and its processes and procedures can often be time consuming and laborious. It is also restricted in the way it operates and does not have the ability to raise additional funds in the same way as a community organisation or charity would.

Cllr Yvonne Ritchie said she was confused as to why the Town Council would be described as a less suitable asset manager.

The administrator explained that she felt this point referred to the fact that the Town Council have to competitively tender for work, not giving any preference to suppliers and contractors, whereas Prudhoe Community Partnership is free to offer work and negotiate prices for work as they fit. The administrator did, however, challenge that the Town Council was not able to raise additional funds in the same way as a community organisation or a charity, stating that as well as the precept there were a wide variety of funding opportunities that were open to the Town Council to apply for.

Cllr Chris Cuthbert asserted that she was totally against Prudhoe Community Partnership getting the East Centre as an asset. Cllr Jennifer McGee agreed stating that the Town Council was most suitable as they are open and transparent about decision making and accountable to the public.

Cllr Chris Cuthbert assured that she was not fazed at all by the prospect of managing a building and that around the table there was the skills and experience needed to take this forward for the town.

Cllr Andy Gill commented that the Town Council is a stable organisation that will always remain, the future of charities is more uncertain.

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Cllr Chris Cuthbert mooted the possibility of the Town Council saving costs by moving into the building previously used by Adult Learning, accepting that this was not a Town Council steer but simply a suggestion to investigate.

Cllr Russ Greig agreed that the Town Council should certainly look into the possibility of moving as there would be a cost saving as well as more space. Cllr Russ Greig suggested the Town Council could set up a trust and that he was fully in favour of going for it and building the capacity in which to manage it successfully for the community.

Cllr Gerry Price stated the first point of clarification is whether the Town Council wish to take on the East Centre as a Community Asset Transfer. **This was unanimously AGREED.**

Cllr Gerry Price described that the Deputy Leader of NCC was keen to work with the Town Council and can help identify a number of charity sources in order to develop a local youth service offer, like those in Corbridge and Hexham, additionally, the town already boasted the Youth Charity Shop and Motor Project.

In response to Cllr Glenn Simpson's question about staffing, Cllr Gerry Price discussed that the Town Council may have to outsource the production of a business plan. Cllr Chris Cuthbert disagreed, stating that she firmly believed the Town Council could achieve this internally with the support of NCC. Cllr Chris Cuthbert concluded 'we are a Town Council; it is time we acted like one.'

Meeting closed