

PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 29th April 2015

Present

Cllr Mrs E Burt (Chair) Cllr G Price, Cllr E Dobson, Cllr A Gill, Cllr G Simpson, Cllr A Piper, Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert, Cllr A Reid, Cllr Mrs J McGee, Cllr D Couchman

1415/172 Apologies for Absence

Cllr G McCreedy, Cllr Ms J Rose, Cllr Mrs N McGee, Cllr B Futers, County Cllr Mrs Anne Dale

1415/173 Declarations of Interest None**1415/174 Tour of Britain Cycle Race** (in attendance Gareth Davis, Engagement Manager NCC)

Cllr Mrs Burt introduced Gareth Davis, the Engagement Manager for NCC. Mr Davis described that the Tour of Britain is the biggest event of the racing calendar; the highest ranked race of the year; the Tour of Yorkshire is a category below. Mr Davis described that there are 160 countries competing and this would be the first Team Wiggins.

Mr Davis explained that the council decided to work with partners to bring the race for 2 days in order to show off some of the most beautiful and most historical parts of Northumberland, but also to bring communities together. A more technical meeting has been called by Zoe Bottrell (Culture Creative) and James Fell (NCC) for Friday, however Mr Davis described that community engagement was his domain. Mr Davis explained that a lot of details will not be finalised until June, he said *“Although we know exactly what we hope to achieve, how we do that is not set in stone. The goals are economic and health benefits as well as promoting Northumberland as a visitors spot. The local economy will benefit from the 2 stages, 3 days racing and an amateur race on the previous Sunday. We also want those visitors coming to the watch the race to stay as long as possible in the places that the event is significant; there is a chance to get close to the 120 riders, a presentation and team buses. We will be organising some events with Active Northumberland and would like community leaders, like the town council, to take up this opportunity and get involved.”* Mr Davis added that the intention was not just to increase trade in the county, but to inspire people in the community to get on a bike and maybe go a bit further than they would usually.

Mr Davis concluded by saying that the town council knew the people and the businesses in the town and would be best placed to know what could be achieved to support this event. Other towns and villages had thought about representing Northumberland colours in their planting scheme and having decorated cycles on route. Mr Davis described that the ideas generated in Yorkshire came from grassroots level; he said *“The Tour of Britain is something that will happen in cooperation with the community, not to the community.”*

Cllr Mrs Burt thanked Mr Davis for attending the meeting and asked Cllrs if they had any comments or questions. Cllr Price asked how individual shops would get involved. Mr Davis responded that they would like individual shops to approach the events manager at Culture Creative to find out more, adding that all ideas would be looked at with a view to ensuring compliance, as well as offering support. Cllr Price asked if normal trade would be restricted in view of barriers and other safety precautions. Mr Davis responded that the idea was to increase economic benefit.

Cllr Piper raised concerns about car-parking if there were hundreds of people expected to visit. Mr Davis responded that they would encourage the use of public transport and of course cycling and walking into town in order to reduce traffic congestion, but again the idea was to bring people to the county.

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Cllr Gill asked if a full road closure would be in place. Mr Davis responded that there would be a full road closure for the start of the race and a rolling road closure thereafter.

Cllr Dobson asked how the town council could manage its input to avoid any overlap. Mr Davis encouraged contacting Zoe Bottrell at Culture Creative to run any ideas past her first.

Cllr Mrs Burt highlighted that it would be a great achievement to get the Front Street traders involved in the event and she hoped the town council's events group would be able to come up with something positive, perhaps with a cash prize.

Cllr Reid stated that a lot of people are speculating that all the roads on route will be re-surfaced for the race, and was this the case? Mr Davis responded that the route had been checked and there didn't appear to be any need for any re-surfacing, adding that there did however need to be a cost benefit to having the race, money would not be spent unless necessary or advantageous. Mr Davis commended the financial input from Northumbrian Water Ltd. and mentioned the Robson Green effect; having the Robson Green programme showcasing Northumberland has been a boost to tourism and it is hoped that the Tour of Britain will have the same effect. Cllr Piper stated that he would be disappointed if Front Street was not repaired, Cllr Mrs J McGee agreed. Mr Davis agreed to feed this back but he did warn that cyclists liked a challenge and the route had been checked.

1415/175 Vacancy on Prudhoe Town Council

The council acknowledged receipt of Cllr Mrs M Harris' resignation from the council. The clerk advised that the 'Notice of Vacancy' had been published.

Cllr Mrs Burt and Mrs J McGee commended the years of service Mrs Harris had as a Cllr and were sorry she was not able to continue. Cllr Mrs J McGee asked if the town council would be writing to Mrs Harris. Cllr Mrs Burt expressed that she had already written, and other Cllrs were welcome to do the same.

1415/176 Minutes of Ordinary Meeting, held on 25th March 2015

It was **AGREED** to receive the minutes

Proposed: Cllr A Gill

Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

1415/177 Matters Arising

Page 1 – The Clerk reported that a reply had been received from Network Rail confirming that the reason the Prudhoe footbridge had not been re-painted, and others on the line had, was as it required strengthening work; this is scheduled for the present financial year. Additionally Network Rail confirmed that the footbridge was Grade II Listed and would be replaced 'like for like', and be re-painted in the red/cream colour way as standard along the line. It was reported that if the Town Council wished to change the colour from red/cream to racing green to match the Prudhoe/Ovingham Bridge, approval would have to be sought. **It was AGREED to make the necessary enquiries to facilitate this request.**

Page 3 – Cllr Mrs J McGee asked if a response had been received from Northumberland County Council Leader Grant Davey and/or Northumberland Estates representative Colin Barnes regarding the Front Street Commercial Opportunity Site and the possibility of attending the May meeting. The Clerk indicated that Cllr Davey had replied stating that the letter had been passed to Geoff Paul (Director of Planning, Housing and Economy) for a response, and that Colin Barnes had agreed to attend a meeting.

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Proposed: Cllr A Gill

Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

1415/179 Accounts 2014/15

a) End of year Bank Reconciliation for 2014/15

It was AGREED to receive the end of year bank reconciliation

Proposed: Cllr G Simpson

Seconded: Cllr A Reid

b) Monthly Bank Reconciliations – to receive statement dated 10th March – 9th April 2015**It was AGREED to receive the end of year bank reconciliation**

Proposed: Cllr G Simpson

Seconded: Cllr A Reid

c) Statement of Expenditure from 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015**It was AGREED to receive the statement and note money carried over to budget headings for invoices, and money carried to balances****1415/180 Accounts 2015/16**a) **It was AGREED to approve statement of Budget for 2015/16 (previously agreed)**

Proposed: Cllr G Simpson

Seconded: Cllr A Gill

b) **It was AGREED to approve an allocation of £2,500 for Employer Pension Contributions, to be taken from additional balances**

Proposed: Cllr A Gill

Seconded: Cllr A Reid

c) **It was AGREED to receive updated 'additional balances available'**

Proposed: Cllr A Reid

Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

d) **It was AGREED to authorise the accounts to be paid since last meeting, and to endorse those accounts already paid**

Proposed: Cllr A Gill

Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

1415/181 Highfield Park Play Consultation

Cllr Mrs J McGee described that members of the Highfield Park Improvements Group had visited both Highfield Middle School and Prudhoe West First School in order to consult with the young people who were the users of the park. Cllr Mrs J McGee described that it was great to hear what the young people had to say, as well as demonstrating how keen the council are to listen to their opinions. Following a presentation, the plans of provider A and provider B were left with Highfield Middle School for a full week; class representatives then conveyed feedback to Cllrs on the group. Provider B was preferred by a slim margin.

At Prudhoe West First School, Cllrs met with a selection of year 4 pupils who considered each plan and selected the preferred scheme. Again by a slim margin, provider B was preferred.

It was AGREED to receive the report of consultation

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

Cllr Mrs Burt thanked the group involved and explained that the contracts would be considered at the end of the meeting as a section 68 agenda item.

PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL**Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 29th April 2015****1415/182 Town Council Insurance**

It was AGREED to receive the council's Insurance Policy Schedule for 2015/16 with Zurich Municipal and endorse payment of the premium

Proposed: Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert Seconded: Cllr A Gill

1415/183 Northumbria in Bloom

It was AGREED to receive the report of judge's feedback from the Northumbria in Bloom Spring visit on Friday 10th April.

Cllr Mrs J McGee commented that it was a really good visit, with very positive comments from the judges, especially in relation to the 2 First Schools visited. Cllr Gill complimented on the flower beds as you drive into the town, saying they looked very well indeed. Cllr Mrs Burt agreed, adding that the scheme suited the town and achieved deserved praise.

1415/184 The Prudhoe Market

Cllr Mrs J McGee gave a verbal report of the meeting held on Friday 24th April 2015 with Street Scene Group Cllrs, David Robson (NCC Neighbourhood Services), Joanne Jackson (Trader) and Greg Gavin (NCC Divisional Manager). Cllr Mrs J McGee described that there had been 11 stalls confirmed as attending in April but there were a series of last minute cancellations resulting in only 5. NCC Officers promised they were committed to making the Prudhoe Market a success and they would continue to try and attract more traders; music is planned for the May Market and possibly some Miners Race publicity.

Additionally the time of the month had been mentioned locally as a possible issue, with reference to people being paid monthly. With this in mind Joanna Jackson agreed to canvas those regular traders to ask if they would be prepared to move to the last Saturday of the month. The clerk also conveyed that those traders (5) who had continued to support the market could be offered further publicity by way of thanks. Cllr Mrs Burt summarised that the council needed to remain positive and encourage members of the public to attend.

1415/185 Reports from outside bodies

Prudhoe Community Partnership (PCP) – Cllr Mrs Burt reported that PCP continued to be active with 3 main projects in addition to managing The Spetchells Centre: The Green Infrastructure Group (Prudhoe Hospital Walled Garden), Live above a Shop Scheme (LASS) and spending plans for £10,000 funding from Portas Bid. With regard to the LASS, Cllr Mrs Burt explained that they expected to submit a planning application for a re-build very soon, but the idea remained to have 2 shops on the ground level and 2 flats above, with the flats managed by ISOS. The Green Infrastructure Group maintained that there was still hope for the Prudhoe Hospital Walled Garden as a community attraction but it was difficult to find the money for a full feasibility study. The 2nd drop of the Shopping Directory (funded by Portas £10,000) was being delivered now, there would a small balance remaining that could be spent in the town (restrictions apply).

Cllr Mrs Burt concluded that PCP was still actively seeking trustees and in particular someone with financial skills. The Northumbrian Citizens Advice Bureau has now moved in so the building is near full which adds to the financial stability of PCP.

SCA – Cllr Price reported that the SCA meeting had been postponed.

Northumbrian Citizens Advice Bureau – **It was AGREED** to receive the reports from CAB. The news that they are now operating from The Spetchells Centre was warmly received.

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NCC Town & Parish Council Liaison Meeting – Cllr Dobson reported a positive meeting and especially commended the presence of Senior NCC Officers to give reports and answer questions. Cllr Dobson alluded that the Planning Review took up a great deal of time, expressing that this would be better reported at a later meeting. Cllr Dobson reported that income from parking notices has gone up, although there are fewer officers. Northumberland has moved from the 2nd worst for enforcement of litter/dog fouling to 2nd best, this is believed to be due to adopting an intelligence approach, based on local knowledge and extending those officers able to issue penalty notices. Cllr Dobson also reported that the review of public conveniences is on-going and NCC expects to update CCTV and make more use of mobile cameras.

1415/186 Annual Town Meeting

To note the date of the Annual Town Meeting, to be held on **Tuesday 19th May, from 6:15pm.** Cllr Mrs Burt advised that the format would be the same as previous years with those in receipt of grant aid invited to attend with displays. Cllr Mrs Burt also confirmed that the Annual Report was at the printers and would be delivered immediately after the bank holiday.

1415/187 Correspondence and Publications**Correspondence****1. Local Councils in England: Annual Return for the financial year ended 31st March 2015**

Letter dated 25th March 2015 from the External Auditor, BDO, enclosing the Annual Return and supporting documentation. **It was AGREED** to display the Notice (1st June to 14th June 2015) advising electors of their right to inspect the accounts at the council's place of business between 15th June and 10th July 2015. **It was noted** that the council was required to approve the Annual Return for return to the External Auditor by 13th July 2015

2. Northumberland County Council: Planning Service Review

Letter dated 1st April 2015 from the Leader of Northumberland County Council, Councillor Grant Davey, received electronically by the council and previously forwarded to all councillors.

The letter notes that the recommendations made to the Full County Council (previously received by this council) following the consultants' report were accepted in the main by NCC subject to the following amendments:

- I. Review after 6 months of the change in the planning committee start time to 2.00pm
- II. Flexibility in the location of committee meetings
- III. "Applications with valid objections from parish and town councils contrary to the Officer recommendation will be considered by the relevant planning committee Chair in discussion with the Head of Service prior to a decision being made"
- IV. Review by a working group of the structure of the proposed committees, reporting to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 20 May.

The letter states the reason for the review of the planning service; outlines the role of local councils in the planning service; describes the scheme of delegation; and announces a performance management plan. The letter concludes by proposing "a 6 month review of the system following implementation to ensure that the changes are working. We will seek feedback from town and parish councils and other stakeholders on the new system."

A separate document sets out the Terms of Reference and Powers for a) the Planning and Environment and Rights of Way Committee and b) the Area Planning Committees.

It was AGREED to receive the report and to request briefing meetings for local Cllrs in June/July once the structure is agreed.

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3. Northumberland County Council: Prudhoe Hospital Re-development – Planning Application

Further to the consideration by this council of the planning application (details below), responses have been received from statutory consultees. These responses have been forwarded to the council by NCC Planning Officer, Vivienne Cartmell.

General – Prudhoe Hall Ward

Planning Ref. 14/04160/FUL

Proposal: Development comprising the demolition of non-listed buildings, erection of 392 dwellings (Use Class C3), conversion of Prudhoe Hall and associated buildings to provide 12 dwellings (Use class C3), improvement works to Walled Garden and associated access, landscape and infrastructure. Applicant: Gentoo Homes / Homes & Communities Agency

The responses received have been as follows:

- Highways (received late March and forwarded to councillors at that time) - tabled
- Sport England (forwarded to councillors on 29 April) - tabled
- SuDS Officer (forwarded to councillors on 29 April) - tabled

The Planning Officer suggested that the County Ecologist may amend their response to the application, following a modification of the 'natural buffers' to the development by the applicant. She also advised that it is likely that this application will be brought before the relevant NCC planning committee on Wednesday 13 May.

Cllr Reid explained that due to changes expected as a result of the Planning Service Review, it was thought prudent to hear this application before the changes take effect, otherwise a new committee would be required to be briefed.

Cllr Mrs J McGee was concerned that this amendment had not been formally brought back to the council, as is usual, and additionally that there was insufficient time. Cllr Mrs J McGee went on to say that this was a major application for the town and more diligence should be shown. Cllr Piper agreed. Cllr Reid argued that the present West Area Committee would be more advantageous to here the application than a new committee.

Cllr Mrs Burt recommended that Cllrs made comments on-line or to the Clerk, or attended the West Area Planning Committee on the 13th May.

4. Northumberland County Council: Street Trading Policy - Consultation

Letter dated 24 April 2015 from Tasmin Hardy, Senior Licensing Officer, NCC, inviting the council to comment on the draft policy. The policy was endorsed by NCC's Licensing and Regulatory Committee on 16 April.

The main changes to the current policy involve the following:

- Changes to reflect current legislative provisions and European directives
- Changes to the maximum period of time for the application consultation and process
- Removal of the provisional permit

The draft policy is available to view at www.northumberland.gov.uk (we suggest entering 'street trading' in the website search box) or on request to licensing@northumberland.gov.uk or by calling 01670 623856. Responses to the consultation should be received by 5.00pm on Friday 22 May 2015.

It was AGREED to place this on the PCW's agenda

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Undated letter of April 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. This document is intended to be in place until Gateshead Council has the ability to ask for contributions under the Community Infrastructure Levy.” on guidance for developers. The draft document” is available at www.gateshead.gov.uk with the consultation running from 23 April to 5 June 2015.

Responses / comments etc can be made to:

- Online portal – <http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/consultation>
- Letter – to Spatial Planning and the Environment, Gateshead Council, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead NE8 1HH
- Email – ldf@gateshead.gov.uk

It was AGREED that Cllrs should comment as individuals on this matter

6. Gateshead Council: Public Consultation – Community Infrastructure Levy: Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule

Undated letter of April 2015 from Mr N Wilkinson, Spatial Development, Gateshead Council, advising of the above consultation. The letter describes the function of the Levy. Consultation previously took place in 2012, but changes to the Levy regulations have meant that residents and stakeholders are being consulted once more. The draft document is available at www.gateshead.gov.uk with the consultation running from 23 April to 22 May 2015.

Responses / comments etc can be made to

- Online portal – <http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/consultation>
- Letter – to Spatial Planning and the Environment, Gateshead Council, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead NE8 1HH
- Email – ldf@gateshead.gov.uk

It was AGREED that Cllrs should comment as individuals on this matter

Tabled Items

1. NALC E-News – Newsletter for April 2015
2. Northumberland County Council - Tour of Britain Cycle Race 2015: Background information, Schools’ Briefing, Business Projects Opportunities (previously emailed to councillors) to receive a report on items submitted since the last meeting (to be tabled)

It was AGREED to receive the tabled items

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:-

1415/188 Highfield Park Play Equipment

It was AGREED to provisionally award the contract for the replacement of Highfield Park play equipment to **Sutcliffe Play for the sum of £80,278**. Members of the Highfield Park Improvements Group agreed to meet with the contractor to scrutinise the details of the contract before firming up the offer.