

**PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

**Present**

Cllr Mrs Burt (Chair), Cllr A Gill, Cllr E Dobson, Cllr B Futers, Cllr K Graham, Cllr A Reid, Cllr Mrs J McGee, Cllr Piper, Cllr G Price, Cllr Mrs N McGee,  
County Cllr Mrs Anne Dale

**1516/160 Apologies for Absence** Cllr G McCreedy, Cllr Couchman, Cllr G Simpson, Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert, Cllr J Rose

**1516/161 Declarations of Interest** None

**1516/162 The Fuse Media Centre**

Cllr Mrs Burt welcomed David Brewis and outlined that following a meeting at The Fuse Media Centre she thought it would be a good idea for someone from The Fuse to come along to explain what they currently do and any plans for the future.

Mr Brewis introduced himself:

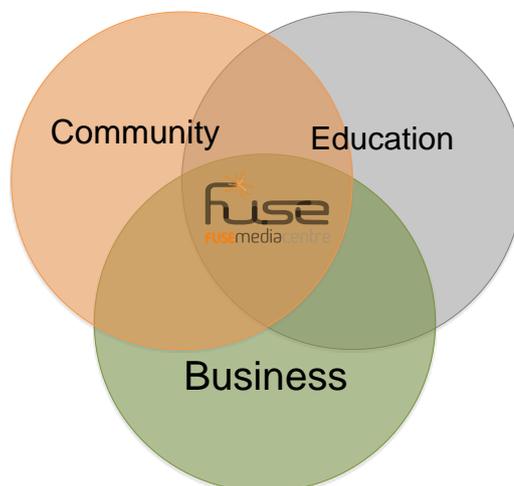
**David Brewis**

- Independent Video Producer/Director working internationally
- Owner of production company Ten80
- Skilled director and video editor with International TV credits
- Producer of video for digital marketing and comms
- Registered UN Consultant (video communications)
- Based in Prudhoe & Paris!

[www.ten80.co.uk](http://www.ten80.co.uk)  
[www.ten80.fr](http://www.ten80.fr)  
davebrewis@ten80.com



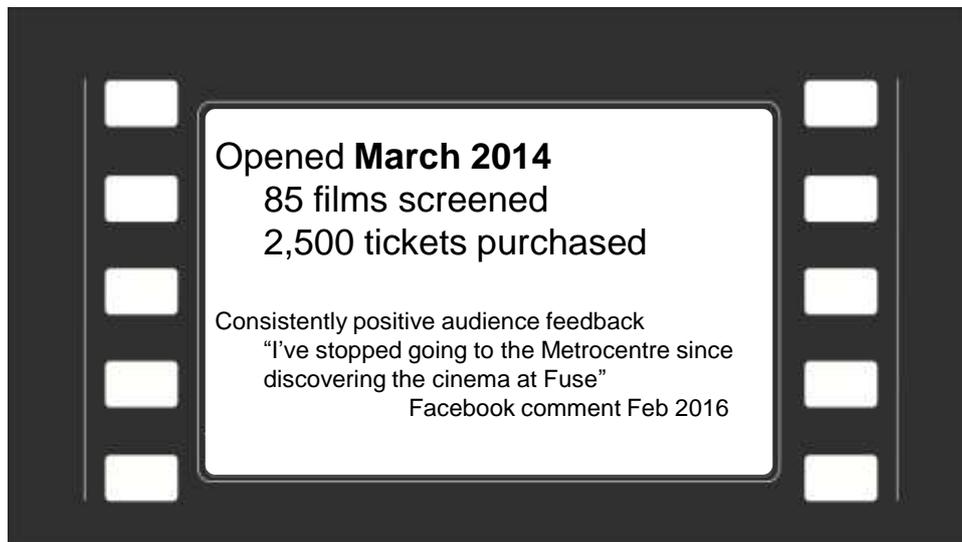
Mr Brewis went on to explain that The Fuse, as a building, is owned by Northumberland County Council and run by a Community Interest Company (CIC) of which he is a board member. Mr Tim Smith (also a teacher at Prudhoe Community High School) is the Chair of the board but was not available to attend due to being away on a field trip with pupils.



## PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

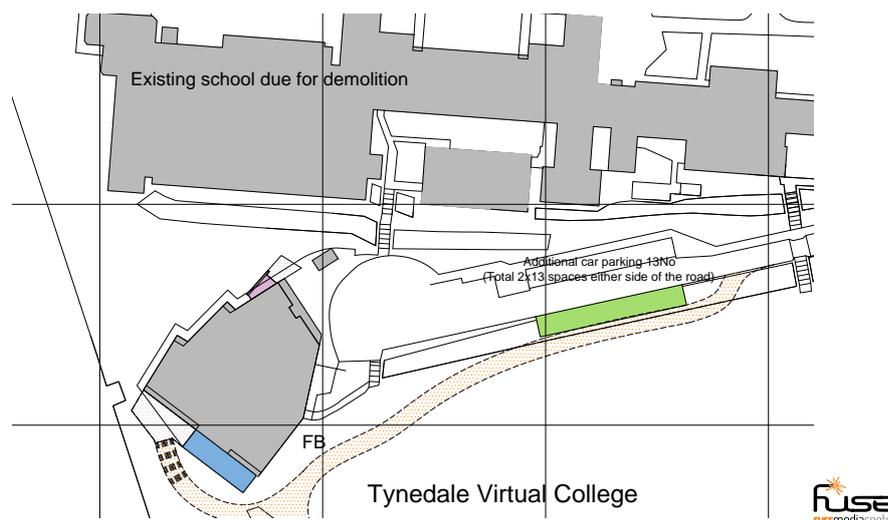
Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Mr Brewis described that the Education and Community aspect shown above is already being carried out: community dance, music and cinema and education for A-Level student in Media, however it is the business aspect that is believed could be developed and there is commercial interest.



Mr Brewis explained that when the Community Cinema opened in April 2014 it was launched with 'Art House' films; however public choice saw the move towards commercial movies. With ticket prices low at £6 adult, £4 concession/child and £18 for a family ticket this local cinema is significantly less expensive than out of town cinemas but there does need to be a wider discussion about how to improve use.

The demolition of Prudhoe Community High School was described by Mr Brewis as having significant positive effect on The Fuse. Mr Brewis enlightened that when the school is demolished, The Fuse will look and feel more independent, whilst support from the school will continue this will be on a contractual basis.

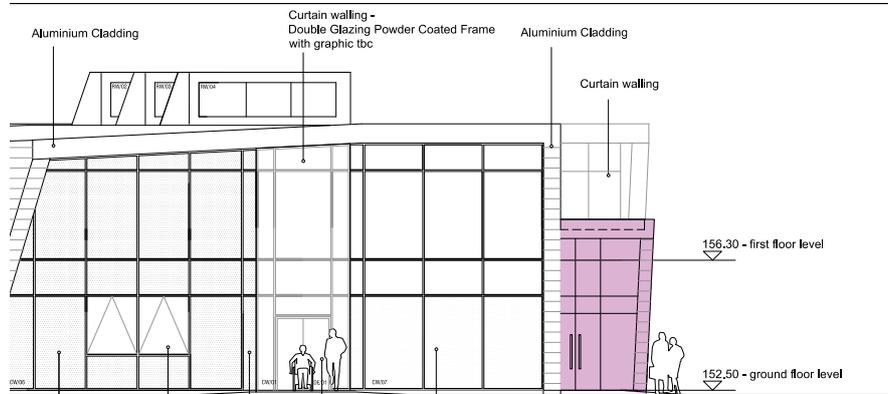


Mr Brewis gave his personal view that the facilities were underused and advised that there was a tentative plan drawn up to improve usage. The facilities on offer include home and workspace digital production, 4 enterprise units on the first floor, 315 square metres of studio space, the largest green screen in the North-East, as well as video and radio production. Mr Brewis summarised the plan that would allow 'community', 'education' and 'business' all under one roof.

## PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016

The original architect has been involved in the plans and it is expected that changes can be made to the building that would give business users separate access at the front, allowing them access at any time. With the new scheme priced The Fuse are presently bidding for funding to take this forward.



The proposed 'business' users were described as being a small cluster of companies involved in digital communications, building greater usage and also helping to create sustainable jobs for the future. Northumberland County Council and their regeneration arm 'ARCH' have been involved and agree that the project ticks all the right boxes for government funding of enterprise in rural areas.

Mr Brewis concluded by stating that "The Fuse Media Centre belongs to the town and as it is there we need to think very hard about how to use it, this could be a very good story in the longer term."

Cllr Mrs Burt thanked Mr Brewis and invited questions and comments.

Cllr Gill maintained that the cinema was very poorly marketed and with respect to signage, there was nothing 'jumping out' in the town to say The Fuse was here. Mr Brewis responded that although the community cinema was not his domain, he did know that the economics of running a cinema is very tight and it is a tricky decision to make about spending money on flyers. Cllr Mrs J McGee agreed that the cinema is not well publicised but that she did use it and appreciated having the facility in the town. Cllr Mrs Burt agreed that it was priced correctly and appealed as a good family day out.

Cllr Reid thanked David Brewis for his enthusiastic involvement in The Fuse, outlining that he was involved at the outset and the facility never lived up to expectations. Cllr Reid asked Mr Brewis to clarify the financial difficulties. Mr Brewis explained that The Fuse Media Centre does not break even on a monthly basis, elaborating that this is a problem and as a business you would look to cut costs and increase revenue channels, exactly what the board of the CIC are trying to do with a rental income. Mr Brewis stated that there were 2 members of staff were the primary cost.

Cllr Dobson asked if 'soft marketing' had been carried out to establish the business interest in the space on offer. Mr Brewis replied that he had visited the Northern Design hubs in Gateshead which were very impressive, however explaining that in terms of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) location of the business or their client was inconsequential. Mr Brewis assured Cllrs that there were lots of 1-man/2-man bands working from their bedrooms, that although this was a niche market they only required 4 companies wishing to operate from Northumberland. Mr Brewis concluded that the businesses themselves would be responsible for their own marketing and that would result in greater publicity for The Fuse Media Centre and would put Prudhoe on the map. Cllr Gill suggested that The Fuse Media Centre 'branding' should include the word cinema in order to bring this the fore.

## PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Cllr Piper questioned disabled access if the building was re-designed. Mr Brewis assured Cllrs that the building would continue to be fully accessible in line with up-to-date DDA requirements.

**1516/163 Report of Planning, Contracts and Works Committee, held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016****It was AGREED to receive the report**

Proposed: Cllr Mrs Burt

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

**1516/164 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting, held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016****It was AGREED to receive the minutes as a true record**

Proposed: Cllr Mrs Burt

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

**1516/165 Matters Arising**

*1516/148 Northumberland Estates*; Cllrs were pleased that NE had moved very quickly to consulting with the public.

*1516/154 Tyne River Crossing*; The clerk advised that some neighbouring councils had replied to the letter requesting support and the item would be on the agenda again as soon as all responses had been received.

**1516/166 Accounts 2015/16**

a) **It was AGREED** to receive the bank reconciliations 9<sup>th</sup> January – 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Proposed: Cllr Gill

Seconded: Cllr E Dobson

The chair advised Cllrs that a further £7,000 had been received for Highfield Park from her County Cllr Small Schemes Funding, and although this was expected it was not included in forecasting.

b) **It was AGREED** to receive the statement of Budget and Expenditure up to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Proposed: Cllr Gill

Seconded: Cllr E Dobson

Cllr Gill suggested that VAT should be claimed more frequently than half-yearly. **It was AGREED** to reclaim each quarter in the future.

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

Proposed: Cllr Gill

Seconded: Cllr E Dobson

**1516/167 Office Improvements**

**It was AGREED** to endorse the hire agreement and contract terms of the office photocopier. **It was also AGREED** to endorse the new telephone handset installation.

**1516/168 Presentation of Financial Information**

**It was AGREED** that in the next financial year the budget heading titles should be changed to replicate those in the Northumberland County Council (NCC) Council Tax Information Booklet:

Management & Support
Recreation & Leisure Services
Environmental Services

Cemeteries
Grants & Subsidies
Other services

It was also agreed that the following sub-headings should be moved out of 'Other' and into 'Management & Support':

Office rental and rates (PCP)
Office Sundries and Stationery
Meeting Hire (PCP)
Audit Fee

Insurance PTC
Subscription
Travel - councillors & staff
Professional Expenses

## PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016

The administrator advised that in 2017/18 the Council Tax Information Booklet, as well as the Town Council's Accounts would show a large increase budget for Management & Support; however the council could ask NCC to include a note with the information. **This was AGREED.**

**1516/169 Western Avenue**

Cllr Mrs Burt advised that a resident of Western Avenue had contacted her regarding the speed of cars travelling down Western Avenue onto Station Bank. Following a speed survey, NCC Officers proposed 'no action' as the speed of vehicles did not exceed 30mph, although the speed limit is 20mph. Cllr Mrs Burt went on to describe other suggestions made that she could fund from her Small Schemes Allowance. These included 1) a chicane, 2) rumble strips.

Cllr Futers asked if the appearance of horizontal lines on the road could be used, as is the case on the approach to roundabouts, this gives the illusion of driving faster and does help to slow traffic. It was discussed that cars do increase speed to get past parked cars on the approach to the junction, this could affect speed surveys.

Cllrs Mrs N McGee, Cllr Piper and Cllr Gill suggested that a chicane would be ill advised due to the number of parked cars already on the kerbside and the dangerous use of chicanes on Castlefields Drive were used to illustrate this point, as cars frequently park beside them and some are placed on blind bends. Rumble strips were acknowledged as being quite noisy by Cllr Gill and Cllr Price and the suggestion was made to ask residents first.

Cllrs Mrs Burt agreed that a rumble strip was the preferred option and she hoped to progress this as a way to slow down cars.

**1516/170 British Gas/Community Action Northumberland**

Cllrs were advised that over 200 energy monitors given by Stocksfield Association at the end of February had been successfully allocated as part of the British Gas and Community Action Northumberland initiative. Cllr Mrs Burt also thanked the Hexham Courant for promoting the scheme.

**1516/171 Castle Dene Allotments**

**It was AGREED** to receive the response from the Northumberland Estates that they considered the outcome of the rent review for the allotments to be fair.

**1516/172 Cemetery & Memorial Sub-Committee**

**It was AGREED** to receive report of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

Cllr Gill raised serious concerns again about the length of time being taken to register the title of the cemetery, citing two years in progress. Cllr Gill asked for a telephone call to Caris Robson to ask for a sense of urgency and if no advancement a meeting to explain why.

Cllr Gill explained that planting and commemorating on top of graves is an on-going issue, although this is prohibited it has gone unchecked for a long time, without action to resolve the problem. With respect to this, NCC are now asking if the rules are going to be enforced as not only does it make grass-cutting more difficult, it can pose a health and safety problem.

Cllr Mrs Burt asked what the proposal of the Cemetery Sub-Committee was. Cllr Gill responded that no-one wishes to tackle this very emotive issue. Cllr Mrs Burt acknowledged that it was not fair to ask the cemetery attendant to enforce something that was carried out before his time. Cllr Mrs Burt called for the council to contact those contravening the rules and ask them to take direct action or to shelve it and do nothing. Cllr Gill advised that NCC stated they would stop cutting the grass around the graves concerned if action was not taken.

## PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Cllrs Piper and Futers suggested that if NCC stops cutting the grass around the graves, family members will contact the town council and the Clerk can explain why. Cllr Mrs Burt described that this would make the whole cemetery look a state. Cllr Dobson suggested the council should contact those concerned to advise that the grass will not be cut if items in addition to the memorial are not removed.

Cllr Mrs J McGee believed that grave owners were already advised of the rules. The clerk responded that a conversation with one member of the public had evoked a very emotive response. Cllr Futers pointed out that items may be put onto graves by a number of family members so who would the council right to, also adding that this was quite unique to Prudhoe. Cllr Gill agreed that this would not be permitted in Hexham.

Cllr Mrs Burt summarised the proposals:

- 1) Write to the grave owner and state that the grass will not be cut around their graves unless all additional items are removed.
- 2) cease grass-cutting of the grave and await a direct approach from the grave owners.

**It was AGREED** to write to the grave owners concerned stating that the grass will not be cut unless additional items are removed.

Cllr Gill advised that he had given the cemetery attendant a pocket sized notice that could be given out to those questioning the 'No Dogs Allowed' enforcement.

### 1516/173 Annual Town Meeting

**It was AGREED** to hold the Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May, from 7pm. Cllrs were asked to suggest a suitable format for the meeting. Cllr Reid suggested that the inviting of Community Groups has become quite stale, having done this for the last 3 years.

The clerk advised that Community Groups were initially invited to give the Annual Town Meeting more content and a greater appeal, as very few attended previously, this format had worked. The administrator stated that Grant Aid recipients do feel obliged to attend and also make an effort with their tables so if the council is not fully committed to the format it would be at odds to have it.

**It was AGREED** to have the same format as previous years.

Cllr Mrs Burt clarified that the Annual Report would be delivered w/c 25<sup>th</sup> April as this was the only slot available to the distributor between then and the end of May, the closing date for first draft of the Annual Report by the publisher was given as 8<sup>th</sup> April.

### 1516/174 Reports from outside bodies

NCC – Cllr Reid reported that NCC has received numerous reports about the state of the town, mainly with respect to litter. Cllr Reid advised that Prudhoe Depot have not managed to replace all the equipment that was damaged during the flooding yet, therefore they are behind with street cleansing but a street sweeper had been borrowed from a neighbouring town and the streets had been swept now.

Prudhoe Community Partnership – Cllr Mrs Burt advised that all legal matters were being tied up with the Live above Shop Scheme (LASS) and demolition will commence in April.

Prudhoe Pathforce – **it was AGREED** to receive the report.

## PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016**1516/175 Eastwood Park – Urgent Item (placed on the agenda by Cllr Mrs Burt)**

Cllr Gill questioned why this was being added as an urgent item? Cllr Mrs Burt explained that NCC had asked for a steer from the town council on the attitude to parking provision and the development of the play area.

Cllr Mrs Burt described that at the residents meeting, parking had been cited as a major concern and this would see the provision of more parking spaces. Cllr Gill acknowledged that parking was previously in the bottom corner, prior it being developed last time around. Cllr Futers suggested that this looked a better option.

Cllr Mrs Burt described that Sam Talbot would be given the task of future layouts at Eastwood Park and regeneration would hopefully happen at the south end of the park. Cllr Mrs Burt added that additional pitches were needed at the Eastwood School site in order to remove the Sport England objection to the development at Prudhoe Hospital. Once the school site becomes football pitches the temporary parking provision is lost; this scheme supports more parking spaces at Eastwood Park to off-set that loss.

Cllr Mrs J McGee advised that the town council should be working closely with Sam Talbot on the regeneration of the play areas at the south of the park.

**It was AGREED** that the re-provision of parking at Eastwood Park was a suitable scheme and that the council would be happy to work with Active Northumberland and NCC in the regeneration of the play areas.

**1516/176 Correspondence and Publications  
Correspondence****1. Ministry of Justice: Proposed Closure of St George's Churchyard, Mickley**

Letter of 22 February 2016 from Rekha Gohil, Coroners and Burials Policy team, Ministry of Justice. The letter informs the Council of a letter sent to the Secretary of the Parochial Church Council of St George's Church, Mickley, and encloses a copy of this correspondence. The letter announces that the Ministry has "received no objections following the advertisement giving notice of the proposed closure in the parish magazine." The letter states that, subject to specific, listed exceptions, and "in compliance with the provisions of the Burial Act 1953...that it is the intention of the Secretary of State for Justice, after the expiration of ten days from the date of this letter, to represent to Her Majesty in Council that burials should be discontinued within the old burial ground of St George Churchyard, Mickley, Stocksfield, Northumberland." Following publication of the notice of closure as described in the letter "the notice must be posted for at least a month before the Privy Council can finally determine [ie, decide] the application." The letter concludes by informing the St George's PCC that when the closure order is made, it will be sent to, amongst others, the Parish Council and to the St George's PCC.

**It was AGREED to receive the notice**

**2. National Allotment Society (NAS): Northern Regional Representative (letter to members)**

Letter dated 25 February 2016, with enclosure regarding the election, before subsequent suspension, of the NAS' Northern Regional Representative, despite the individual concerned not being a member of the NAS either in a private capacity or as a member of a member Association. This correspondence is reported for information only, as the council is advised that there is not understood to be any connection between this affair and Prudhoe Town Council. The matter is therefore not given here in greater detail.

**It was AGREED to receive the notice**

## PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016

### 3. Resident: New Tyne Crossing

Email dated 14 March 2016 from a resident, previously forwarded to members. The email makes a suggestion for a new river crossing, proposing that the Points Bridge at Hagg Bank could be employed for this purpose, with arrangements made for link roads (i) connecting the A695 Prudhoe bypass with the south end of the bridge and (ii) connecting the north end of the bridge with the A69 at the Wylam / Stamfordham / Rudchester junction. The letter concludes: "I believe this option would reduce the expected traffic saturation east bound through Blaydon from the expansion of housing in Prudhoe and also relieve traffic flow through Ovingham, Wylam, Prudhoe, Horsley and Ovington. It could also improve emergency vehicle access to the same locations. I suggest this is a relatively cheap alternative to a viaduct built across the valley or just replacing the old Ovingham Bridge with a new one in the same place."

The writer also supplies details of their relevant experience over many years as a planning engineer employed by major concerns in the oil, chemical and heavy industry sectors.

**It was AGREED to receive the letter and include it with the April Agenda (responses from neighbouring parishes)**

### 4. Zurich Municipal Insurance: Personal Injury Claim

Letter dated 18 March 2016 (received on 29 March) from Zurich Municipal Insurance, notifying the Council that Zurich have been considering a claim from a named person in respect of a fall, involving tripping on a grid which is shown by photographs to be in the vicinity of the Spetchells Centre, in April 2014. It was AGREED to receive the letter and endorse the action of the office in advising Zurich that the Prudhoe Town Council are not responsible for the area around the Spetchells and are merely tenants at The Spetchells Centre.

### 5. BDO: Notice of annual review of accounts, year ending 31 March 2016

Letter dated 23 March 2016, from Mrs Emma Prince, Senior Manager, BDO, with enclosures.

The letter announces the annual review, and is accompanied by standard information, including details of how electors' rights to view the accounts may be exercised, the annual return form, the BDO Spring Briefing, an intermediate review questionnaire (asking particular questions concerning the council's financial governance).

**It was AGREED to receive the letter and to include formal receipt on the April agenda.**

## Tabled Items

1. Campaign to Protect Rural England: North East Newsletter, Spring 2016
2. Clerks & Councils Direct: Magazine, March 2016, Issue 104
3. Wylam Parish Council: The Wylam Globe, newsletter, Spring 2016, No. 120
4. Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council: NE43 News, newsletter, Issue 58, Spring 2016
5. Inter-Parish Walks leaflet: Prudhoe Pathforce