

**PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**AGREED Minutes of Ordinary Meeting,**  
**held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

**PRESENT**

Cllr Gerry Price (Chair), Cllr Andy Gill, Cllr Russ Greig, Cllr Yvonne Ritchie, Cllr Angie Scott, Cllr Duncan Couchman, Cllr Chris Cuthbert, Cllr Eileen Burt, Cllr Tracy Gilmore, Cllr Jennifer McGee, Cllr Carol Stephenson, Cllr Ignasious Varghese,

County Cllr Gordon Stewart

County Cllr Ken Stow

County Cllr Anne Dale

**1718/060 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Graham Robinson, Cllr George McCreedy, Cllr Glenn Simpson

**1718/061 Declarations of Interest None****1718/062 Youth Service Provision in Prudhoe**

Ashley Brown (Northumberland County Council, Lead Professional – Rural) described that good things had happened over the summer at The East; 2 new groups were created and a National Citizenship Scheme (NCS) was successfully run from the building.

Ashley Brown made reference to the report supplied to members and stated that the Youth Service was under review and he had been asked to gather views and report back.

Cllr Angie Scott asked how the Youth Service reaches out to year 5 pupils who have undergone the sometimes difficult transition from First School to Middle School.

Ashley Brown responded that this was done through the Prudhoe Town Council Young People's Forum (PTCYPF) only which leads into the heads at schools.

Cllr Angie Scott stated that there had been no forum meetings for some time, which had already been discussed, so how else could the young people be reached.

Ashley Brown responded that if Cllr Angie Scott did not think that the PTCYPF was working then he would be happy to hear how else this could be achieved. Ashley Brown reported that the Youth Service will soon pilot the use of social media as it had been successfully used by NCS during the summer.

Cllr Angie Scott stated that residents she had spoken with had expressed disappointment at the lack of activities available during the summer.

Ashley Brown advised that the East Centre was used by NCS during the summer.

Cllr Angie Scott asked how many young people from Prudhoe were part of the NCS running during the summer.

Ashley Brown confirmed that there were 19 young people from Prudhoe.

Cllr Eileen Burt expressed that although she appreciated that youth work is not about numbers but rather the quality of the service and the outcomes achieved she was concerned about the very low figures through the doors during the day, when 1 member of staff is being utilised. Cllr Eileen Burt quoted 8 daytime drop-ins in the whole of July.

Ashley Brown responded that it would be usual for the young people dropping-in during the day to have very complex needs.

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Cllr Eileen Burt reported a lot of negative feelings about anti-social behaviour and stated she was not aware of the work of the detached team nor were they visible in the town. Cllr Eileen Burt made clear that the reason the Town Council fund this work is because they think it is important.

Ashley Brown responded that the detached team respond to reports and the police often call into the East Centre, but he would feed back the comments.

Cllr Eileen Burt asked how many hours the East Centre was open and how many staff supported opening hours during the day.

Ashley Brown responded that they were trying to move away from saying the East Centre was open all day and instead having staff available at particular times. Ashley Brown confirmed that usually the East Centre is open from 11 am until 4 pm so that young people can 'drop-in' for support, then it closes before opening again for the evening session.

Cllr Jennifer McGee commented that she would expect day-time figures to be low during the day in term-time as young people are at school.

Ashley Brown clarified that towards the end of July NCS would have been getting the building ready for their programme

Cllr Jennifer McGee agreed that detached work did not seem as effective as it has been in the past and communication between the Town Council, the Youth Service and Neighbourhood Policing Team could be improved. Cllr Jennifer McGee outlined that there were several problem areas in the town and work should be done to reduce the issues arising.

Ashley Brown confirmed that he would be happy to meet and find a way to address this.

County Cllr Anne Dale stated that as she understood it the figures represent a tally each time a young person accesses the East Centre or makes contact with the detached team. With this in mind County Cllr Anne Dale was keen to learn if this represented all core service users, and if so how the Youth Service is providing for those not using the service. Cllr Anne Dale asked if figures could be made available for the number of users, as opposed to a tally in/out.

Ashley Brown responded that the figures would most likely include a core group of young people who access the services on a regular basis but user figures could be presented.

Cllr Angie Scott stated that Prudhoe should look at the models delivered in Corbridge and Hexham as they were more activity based, offered trips and catered for young people with different needs. Cllr Angie Scott said that she had attended a Junior Session at the East Centre and found it lacking in any planned activities.

Ashley Brown responded that he would be happy to speak directly with Cllr Angie Scott about the Junior Sessions outside of the meeting.

Cllr Gerry Price asked if the East Centre had sufficient staff. Ashley Brown responded that they did.

Cllr Gerry Price suggested that it would be helpful if Ashley Brown could provide more detailed numbers on the actual number of young people accessing the service.

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Cllr Russ Greig asked how many times the detached team been called to attend things that had been reported to the Youth Service.

Ashley Brown responded that he did not have that information to hand but could find out.

Cllr Andy Gill asked how the food donations were being received. Ashley Brown responded that they were very well received and very popular and the staff made sure that those most in need received food first.

**1718/063 DRAFT Minutes of Ordinary Meeting, held on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

It was **AGREED** to receive the minutes as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Jennifer McGee

Seconded: Cllr Andy Gill

**1718/064 Matters Arising**

**The following matters arising report was tabled by the Administrator:**

**1718/045 County Councillor Reports**

**Low Prudhoe Development** Mr Colin Barnes is reported in the Hexham Courant as saying that the plans for detailed planning and reserved matters were expected to be submitted for approval in October or November.

**Eastwood Park** Work started on 25<sup>th</sup> September and is expected to take 2 - 4 weeks to complete.

**1718/047 Accounts**

The suggested increase in the budget for meeting room hire was proven necessary when the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter invoice was received as room booking for April through to June was £601, although a £15 credit has been given for a session that should have been NCC, not PTC.

**1718/049 RoSPA Play Safety Report**

Sutcliffe Play visited Castle Dene Play Area to inspect the wet pour identified as having an issue and it is wet pour that was previously down and not part of their project, David Robson (NCC) has repaired this.

Progress is required on the following:

- Orchard Hill survey of users/neighbours
- The Copse, new bin and seat agreed (awaiting audit of litter bins)
- Preservative to be added to tyre swing in Castle Dene Play Area

**1718/050 Castlefields Play Provision**

Bellway Homes responded to say that they were as surprised as the Council to see an additional piece of land had been included in the offer and that they remained committed to the transfer of ownership and responsibility of the play area, along with the sum of £10k to be matched by Persimmon Homes, so the Town Council could reinstate it.

This matter has been taken up by Guy Opperman MP and Karen Quinn has advised that she is liaising with Persimmon Homes to resolve the issue.

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**1718/052 Prudhoe East Youth Centre**

*A consultant has been appointed to take forward a feasibility study into the feasibility of a 'community asset transfer of the East Centre building to ensure its continued use for the benefit of the local community.'*

*A confidential report will be received by PTC and PCP at the end of November.*

Page 2 - Cllr Andy Gill stated that although the speed humps on Cheviot View may be considered legal, in his opinion they were still too high and were not the most appropriate solution.

**1718/050 Castlefields Play Provision**

Cllr Jennifer McGee repeated the update in the matters arising report and welcomed the clarification. Cllr Gerry Price updated that a meeting was arranged between Guy Opperman MP and the Developers for 27<sup>th</sup> October (this meeting has been cancelled). Cllr Jennifer McGee asked why this was not being handled by the Town Council. Cllr Gerry Price responded that the local MP is involved hopefully something will be coming in due course, for now, the caveat was that nothing was agreed.

**1718/051 Road-Ends Toilets**

Cllr Gerry Price informed that unfortunately the Road-Ends toilets were vandalised, the door on the men's toilet was smashed and as a result, could not be automatically locked.

Cllr Eileen Burt stated that it was really sad that following the contributions made by Essity and the Town Council, some individuals had let the town down.

**1718/065 County Councillors Reports**

County Cllr Gordon Stewart updated that with respect to the Youth Service the current administration was committed to the service and want to enhance it and make it the best it can be, adding that future meetings would be held to move towards this and the town council would be kept updated as a substantial grant aid provider.

County Cllr Gordon Stewart reported a great event to recruit retained Fire Fighters in Northumberland.

A West Wylam walk-about was completed recently and County Cllr Gordon Stewart was pleased that as well as Cllr Russ Greig, members of Prudhoe Ground Force also attended. The walk-about brought up issues with street cleansing, speed calming and parking issues, especially on Bradley Road. There are concerns over emergency vehicles not being able to access certain streets due to double-parking.

County Cllr Gordon Stewart reported that 15 Tynedale businesses would be represented at the Jobs Fair at Wentworth Leisure Centre in Hexham on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

Visit Prudhoe that has come from the Business Forum and will feature on Visit Northumberland

County Cllr Gordon Stewart indicated that gulley cleaning and other major issues related to flooding would be prioritised by a new appointment Emma Craig, who would be visiting the town.

With respect to Low Prudhoe Development, this had been fully covered in the Hexham Courant and a discussion with Colin Barnes suggested that developments were imminent.

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County Cllr Gordon Stewart responded to Cllr Andy Gill that he would visit Cheviot View again. With respect to flooding in front of Gilmore Estates, County Cllr Gordon Stewart advised that a camera had been placed in the manhole and another was expected.

Cllr Jennifer McGee stated that she was pleased the Low Prudhoe Development was being pursued but that keeping the Town Centre alive was also a priority as there were traders who had been very loyal and who could benefit from the development of the allotment site that includes 10 new units and 50 parking places.

County Cllr Gordon Stewart responded that it was a Northumberland Estates development and he understood that the Town Centre shops would be done at a later date. County Cllr Gordon Stewart continued that the reason the Business Forum was set up was to keep the Town Centre alive, as a social, as well as shopping destination.

Cllr Jennifer McGee asked how near the administration were to resolving the issues with the Core Strategy as she was very concerned about Highfield Lane.

County Cllr Gordon Stewart stated that it was progressing and was frequently discussed. County Cllr Gordon Stewart added that he had requested further information and would update as and when outside of the meeting.

County Cllr Ken Stow advised that he was still chasing up speed calming along West Road, past Prudhoe West Academy and speed monitoring on Station Bank, as well as a response from the tree officer about Western Avenue.

County Cllr Ken Stow advised that a house on South Road that is causing problems for pedestrians and road users has been approached with respect to parking, bins and the overgrown shrubbery. Further along, on Highfield Lane, there would soon be temporary road markings to see if traffic congestion and parking issues could be minimised. This would be put in place at October half-term and monitored on the return to school. County Cllr Ken Stow also advised that with respect to children's on-going safety walking to school he was looking at a pedestrian crossing for South Road.

County Cllr Anne Dale made reference to Northumbrian Citizens Advice Bureau and how she would like to retain them in Prudhoe.

In respect of the Local Transport Programme that was later on the agenda, County Cllr Anne Dale advised that Mickley would be getting a pedestrian crossing to cross from Eastgate Bank outside Mickley Social Club. Additionally, she would be adding the resurfacing of Eastgate from A695 to the entrance to the church.

County Cllr Anne Dale concluded by saying that she believed the withdrawal of the Core Strategy would result in planning applications being snuck in during this vacuum.

Cllr Chris Cuthbert asked County Cllr Anne Dale for an update on the safety measures outside Mickley First School. County Cllr Anne Dale responded that from a funding point of view this was agreed but one of the designers had left the team and therefore there was a holdup. County Cllr Anne Dale added that there would be a consultation on the 20mph speed limit and that it was more cost effective to have everything carried out at the same time. Although the 20mph was a County scheme the rest would be funded from her Capital Small Schemes Allowance.

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Cllr Chris Cuthbert asked if there was a timescale for the scheme. County Cllr Anne Dale responded that there was not.

**1718/065 Prudhoe Poppets**

Alastair Bond stated that since writing the letter to the Town Council the position of Prudhoe Poppets has changed, additionally, he had spoken with County Cllr Gordon Stewart and George Hepburn (Chair of Prudhoe Community Partnership) just prior to the meeting and understood that a review of the youth service is taking place.

The issues previously raised were as follows:

- A lack of community-based activities for young people, especially during the holidays.
- A lack of support for East Youth Centre staff.
- The East Centre building having been neglected.
- East Centre staff advising that their concerns were not listened to and they were not supported.
- 'Seniors' appear to have a lack of respect for both staff and the facilities.
- Playgrounds in the town are neglected.
- The soft play and crèche service at Prudhoe Waterworld has been scaled down.
- There has been a reduction in the sessions provided by Sure Start Children's Centre.

Alastair Bond went on to say that if information pertaining to a 'Youth Service Review' had been in the public domain then he probably would not have raised the issues he had in the same way. Alastair Bond confirmed that Prudhoe Poppets were 100% behind The East, the staff and the Youth Service but there are some serious maintenance issues that need to be addressed.

Alastair Bond explained the success of the Prudhoe Poppets who have 30-40 people are attending, some from outside the area, is partly due to available space and the ability to have different activities for varying ages in different parts of the building. Youth Worker Carol Quinn was working with her 'Young Mums' group to encourage them to attend.

Alastair Bond identified that there was massive community support for the Prudhoe Poppets from the community and from businesses and that the feeling of the community is that the East building should be used more frequently as a community hub. Alastair Bond summarised that going forward, it would be helpful if the reviews that are taking place are more consultative and in the public domain.

Cllr Jennifer McGee stated that she was pleased the stance of the Prudhoe Poppets had changed as Prudhoe Town Council have been involved in Youth Service provision for many years and contribute £20,000 each year. Cllr Jennifer McGee commended the work of Ashley Brown and the Youth Centre staff and stated that the Town Council would support the service as much as they could. Cllr Jennifer McGee added that when the East building went up for sale it was the Town Council who got the matter on the agenda and she would agree that it would be great to improve the facility and welcome more young people.

Cllr Jennifer McGee went on to state that Prudhoe Town Council has taken over all Play Areas, apart from Riding Dene and Eastwood Park, and that they are maintained and in some cases have been developed as a result, referring to Castle Dene and West Mickley. Cllr Jennifer McGee asked for information about the sessions that have stopped at Sure Start Children's Centre.

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Alastair Bond responded that there was a meeting held between Prudhoe Poppets and Sure Start about utilising equipment they no longer used. In relation to Play Areas, the complaints received related to the delay with Eastwood Park, again a communication breakdown.

Cllr Gerry Price advised that the Town Council has a Grant Aid process and that Prudhoe Poppets are encouraged to apply.

Cllr Russ Greig asked that if communication via Facebook was not reaching people, like that put out for Eastwood Park, how should the Town Council and County Cllrs communicate?

Alastair Bond responded that although Facebook is a great tool, posters would have been welcomed.

County Cllr Anne Dale made a statement about Prudhoe Waterworld crèche.

**1718/066 Accounts**

**a) Monthly Bank Reconciliations**

**It was AGREED** to receive the statements from 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 – 9<sup>th</sup> August and those from 10<sup>th</sup> August – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

Proposed: Cllr Eileen Burt

Seconded: Cllr Andy Gill

**b) Statement of Expenditure from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017**

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

Proposed: Cllr Chris Cuthbert

Seconded: Cllr Duncan Couchman

Cllr Chris Cuthbert asked what the figure expected in Environmental Improvements (£1234.51) was for. The Administrator advised that she believed this was County Cllr Funding expected for the defibrillator but she would check and let Cllr Chris Cuthbert know.

**c) Endorsement of accounts paid since July meeting and authorisation of accounts to be paid**

**It was AGREED** to pay the account listed on the Schedule and to endorse those accounts (in bold) that had been paid.

Proposed: Cllr Jennifer McGee

Seconded: Cllr Andy Gill

Cllr Duncan Couchman noted that if replacement pads had been purchased that this must mean that the defibrillator had been used. The Administrator advised that this was the case, although sadly unsuccessfully on both occasions.

**1718/067 Northumberland Citizens Advice (NCAB)**

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

Cllr Eileen Burt stated that she could not believe that Prudhoe and Haltwhistle had been reduced to appointments only and other towns have retained all previous drop-in sessions. Cllr Eileen Burt proposed that the Council write to NCAB stating that they want the drop-in sessions to continue as people are queuing out the door and heavily rely on this service.

Cllr Jennifer McGee stated that the Council could agree to write to NCAB but questioned why when the meeting had made quite clear that the changes were absolutely necessary. Cllr Jennifer McGee refused to be drawn into arguing over who gets what in what town, stating that she was very

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grateful for the service, even if that meant people of Prudhoe had to ring up before getting an appointment.

Cllr Andy Gill suggested that the Council write to say they are very disappointed that the drop-in service has been removed from The Spetchells Centre, and wait to hear what the users say about the telephone service.

Cllr Angie Scott asked if users were made aware of the change. Cllr Jennifer McGee advised that posters and flyers were put out.

Cllr Eileen Burt repeated that she felt Prudhoe was suffering more than anyone else in Northumberland. Cllr Jennifer McGee responded that she would hate to think that the Council reduced the grant aid given to NCAB in 2017/18 as a result of this decision as they need all the money they can get.

Cllr Andy Gill responded that you could also look at it another way, in that the Town Council is currently paying for rooms not being used but for a service being undertaken elsewhere.

Cllr Eileen Burt re-stated the proposal to write to NCAB but changed the proposal to state that the Town Council was disappointed that a town this size does not have a drop-in session and that all steps possible are being taken to bring this back to the town. **This was AGREED.**

Proposed: Cllr Eileen Burt                      Seconded: Cllr Andy Gill

As an aside, Cllr Gerry Price suggested that if anyone was aware of anyone who would be interested in volunteering for NCAB, it would be useful to encourage them.

**1718/067      Universal Credit**

**It was AGREED** to receive the constructive reply from Guy Opperman MP.

**1718/068      West Mickley Play Area**

**It was AGREED** to release the cheque for the work carried out, as soon as repairs had been completed to the satisfaction of the 'acting clerk'.

**1718/069      Prudhoe in Bloom**

Cllr Gerry Price described a very long but very enjoyable presentation and commended all the efforts of the In Bloom Working Group, especially the photographs by Moira Wooldridge and the certificates by Sarah Eden.

Cllr Eileen Burt seconded the congratulations to all those who took part and received certificates.

**1718/070      Essity Prudhoe Miners Race 2017**

Cllr Jennifer McGee thanked those who had worked hard in advance of the event and those who would be involved on the day and apologised for not being as active as Chair as she had been in previous years. Cllr Jennifer McGee concluded that she was sure it would be a great event and the best yet.

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**1718/071 Local Transport Plan Programme 2018-19**

**a) It was AGREED** to receive feedback on the priorities submitted in 2016/17. The Administrator advised that receiving feedback was a very welcome change from previous years.

**b) It was AGREED** to respond with the following 3 priorities for 2017/18.

1. Pedestrian Crossing on South Road.
2. Front Street Resurfacing.
3. Eastgate Bank to St. Georges Church resurfacing.

Cllr Gerry Price asked for Cllr comments on a request for 20mph speed restrictions on all roads off Front Street. Cllr Greig responded that in his opinion it was a waste of time as would not be enforced.

**1718/072 Karbon Homes: Stopping Up of Footpath, land west of 21 Linnheads, High Shaw**

**It was AGREED** to withdraw the objection to the stopping up of the footpath as the Planning Application had been approved and the Town Council could be challenged legally for its actions.

Proposed: Cllr Jennifer McGee

Seconded: Cllr Eileen Burt

**1718/073 Reports from outside bodies**Prudhoe Community Partnership

Cllr Eileen Burt reported that the Feasibility Study on the East Centre, 'The feasibility of a community asset transfer of the East Centre to ensure its continued use for the benefit of the local community' had been commissioned and a report would be received at the end of November. **A date has been set for PTC/PCP to receive a presentation of the report on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017.**

Cllr Eileen Burt confirmed that the Police would move into The Spetchells Centre at the end of October and as well as having room 3 they would have a desk on the ground floor. Cllr Eileen Burt described this as a positive move for the financial viability of Prudhoe Community Partnership.

Parish and Town Council Liaison Committee

Cllr Chris Cuthbert reported that she did not attend the most recent meeting of the committee as the make-up of membership has changed and this is now made up of representatives of the NALC County Committee. In view of this change, Cllr Chris Cuthbert suggested the list of Cllrs on outside bodies should be amended.

**1718/074 Correspondence and Publications****Correspondence**

1. Letter from Kate Stanford on behalf of Project Parent asking for a donation of £250 Project Parent was set up in 2014 as a small Christmas project to give a box of goodies to parents who may be spending Christmas in the hospital with sick children. Boxes include tea, coffee, confectionery and toiletries, photo frames, activity books and some surprises too. They cost £10 each to make up and Project Parent give out about 300/year with requests from hospitals increasing. The project also encourages young people to volunteer and is working with Scouts and Guides and Prudhoe Poppets.

Cllr Gerry Price proposed that in view that the Grant Aid application process for this project would be too late, that he would donate £250 from his Chair's Allowance. **This was AGREED.**

**It was AGREED to receive the following publications**

1. Clerk & Councils Direct – September 2017
2. The Clerk Magazine – September 2017

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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:-

**1718/075 Confidential Minutes of the Human Resources Committee Meeting, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2017**

It was **AGREED** to receive the minutes

**1718/076 Confidential Minutes of the Human Resources Committee Meeting, held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

Page 1, paragraph 5 refers to a management document prepared by Cllr McGee, this should state Cllr Russ Greig.

It was **AGREED** to receive the minutes with the above amendment.

**1718/077 Human Resources Committee Meeting, held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

The full council received an update on the decisions and actions agreed by the HR Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> September, this included to offer a 3 month fixed term contract to Anne Dodd for 8hours/week at £10/hr to work as agreed as Administrative Assistant.

It was **AGREED** to endorse the actions.