

PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT Minutes of Ordinary Meeting,
held in The Spetchells Centre at 7:00pm, 29th November 2017

PRESENT

Cllr Gerry Price (Chair), Cllr Russ Greig, Cllr Angie Scott, Cllr Tracy Gilmore, Cllr Andy Gill, Cllr G Robinson, Cllr Glenn Simpson, Cllr Duncan Couchman, Cllr Eileen Burt, Cllr Jennifer McGee, Cllr Carol Stephenson, Cllr Ignasious Varghese, Cllr Chris Cuthbert (arrived 7:20 pm)

County Cllr Ken Stow, County Cllr Anne Dale

1718/095 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Yvonne Ritchie, Cllr George McCreedy, County Cllr Gordon Stewart

1718/096 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Graham Robinson, as a resident of Humbles Wood.

1718/097 George Wanless

Cllr Gerry Price described the sad circumstances that resulted in the death of George Wanless, a Prudhoe resident and former Prudhoe Councillor and Town Mayor.

1718/098 Minutes of Ordinary Meeting, held on 25th October 2017

The administrator apologised for the incorrect date being shown at the head of the papers and the minute numbers being out of sync; this would be amended prior to being saved as a true record.

With the above amendment, **it was AGREED** to receive the minutes as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Glenn Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Eileen Burt

1718/099 Matters Arising

The following 'Matters to Report' were tabled by the administrator:

1718/081 *The report of the Planning, Contract and Works Committee held on 8th November was received on 26th November, too late to be included on the agenda, however, this was sent to the office, as requested.*

1718/084 Annual Return

The figures shown for assets in the Annual Return have been re-stated as the purchase rather than replacement costs as advised by the external auditor.

There is still information outstanding that needs to be included in the asset register relating to the dates of purchases and their location.

1718/085 Accounts

The invoice that has been paid to West Northumberland Youth Service for the 2nd Quarter has been reduced in lieu of detached sessions not delivered. Out of the 24 sessions that should have taken place since the beginning of the financial year, (2 sessions each week) there have been 14 sessions; the financial reduction is £761.76.

No reduction has been given with respect to the PTC Young People's Forum which has not taken place since April and which funding of £6,386, however, this also includes funding for 10 hours additional youth worker support which is more difficult to quantify.

It is still unknown what aspect of the discretionary funding will be reclaimed. The amount allocated and committed is £5,497.

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1718/086 Town Council Objectives and Financial Planning

A working group of Cllrs Yvonne Ritchie, Glenn Simpson, Angie Scott, Russ Grieg, Tracy Gilmore and Jennifer McGee has not yet formed and met. The Administrator requests that if officer support is required for this that it is picked up in February.

1718/087 Proposal for Partnership Working between NCC and PTC to improve the provision of up-to-date, accurate information regarding bus times at a local level

An email was sent to Iain Hedley (NCC) on 15th November inviting someone to come along and talk to the Town Council about how this would work; to date, this has not been acknowledged.

1718/088 Prudhoe Hospital Development

A letter of response has been received and is included in correspondence. Additionally, there is an update as part of the meeting of the Prudhoe Neighbourhood Management Meeting.

1718/089 Castlefields Toddler Play Area

Cllr Gerry Price is meeting with stakeholders and County Cllr Gordon Stewart on Friday 1st December at 10:15 am with a view to a satisfactory solution.

Cllr Jennifer McGee reminded the meeting that the Town Council has already previously agreed that it wishes to have no involvement in the green space near Towneley Court as it has no community value and has had problems in the past with respect to drainage and that this decision needs to be upheld.

Cllr Gerry Price reassured that no decisions would be taken at the meeting.

Matters raised by Councillors:

1718/081 Correction on Minutes of September Report

Councillor Russ Greig asked if the figures County Cllr Anne Dale had requested for Youth Service activities were received as agreed. County Cllr Anne Dale advised that she had not received anything from Ashley Brown. The administrator confirmed that nothing had come into the office yet and that she would follow this up.

1718/100 County Councillor Reports

County Cllr Ken Stow advised that as he was leaving the house an email had come in regarding the Core Strategy and he would receive this and pass any information to the office.

County Cllr Stow advised that it had been agreed that Arch would dissolve and reform under a new governance but that the Low Prudhoe Development is expected to continue.

County Cllr Stow is aware of a number of speeding concerns regarding Station Bank, South Road, and Mickley and advised this was in hand with 20mph signs expected prior to Easter.

Following a period of downtime due to the lighting contractor going into liquidation, County Cllr Ken Stow confirmed that the new LED lighting should be complete by December.

Following a question from Cllr Eileen Burt, County Cllr Ken Stow confirmed that any street lights not replaced by LED's by the end of December should be reported and that replacement heads were being done first, then new columns where needed.

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It was discussed that previously PTC had been offered the opportunity to have additional lights. Cllr Eileen Burt advised that during her term there were no requests but the Tony Reid did ask for lights at the bottom of Moor Road. County Cllr Ken Stow confirmed additional lights on Cranbrook Drive at a cost of £3,000 each as well as a definite request for lights at the bottom of Moor Road. In respect of Moor Road, they would need to find the funding.

In response to a question from Cllr Jennifer McGee, County Cllr Ken Stow confirmed that the Town Centre Development was Northumberland Estates only whereas the Low Prudhoe Development was a combined effort between Northumberland Estates, Arch, and Northumberland County Council.

In response to a question regarding the priority of each development from Cllr Jennifer McGee, County Cllr Ken Stow confirmed that both he and County Cllr Gordon Stewart had made clear they would like the Town Centre development first but that it is market forces that determine such things.

Cllr Jennifer McGee made the point that shops are very seldom empty for long on Prudhoe Front Street and that there could be interest in the 10 units if they were marketed first. County Cllr Ken Stow agreed but stated that the Town Centre Development was all Northumberland Estates land and funding so they would ultimately decide.

Cllr Graham Stephenson asked about the Business Community that Cllr Jennifer McGee had mentioned being part of the Prudhoe Neighbourhood Management Committee meeting. It was clarified that the business opinion provided by Jill Keeler about the Low Prudhoe and Town Centre Development was following a discussion at the Prudhoe Business Network that businesses could join.

County Cllr Anne Dale offered an update beginning with the statement that 'winter is here' and the gritting route has been operated with the first icy morning. County Cllr Anne Dale advised that she has asked that north facing banks are done as soon as possible; although the main infrastructure is gritted first County Cllr Dale has expressed concern over any not on the priority route that have a steep gradient.

County Cllr Anne Dale celebrated that after 18 years of campaigning for a crossing at Mickley a pelican crossing would be installed soon, following the end to the works to move the bus shelter from outside Mickley Club. County Cllr Anne Dale confirmed that safety bollards outside Mickley First School and 20 mph speed limit past the school would also be forthcoming but potentially not until the next financial year.

County Cllr Anne Dale gave information relating to the increase in abandoned cars not licensed with the DVLA since the paper tax disc ceased.

County Cllr Anne Dale described the dissolving of Arch as a carried through manifesto pledge rather than the right decision and added that she has contacted the Chair of Arch for further information. Likewise, with respect to the Core Strategy withdrawal, County Cllr Anne Dale was not in favour and has used a 'Freedom of Information' request and challenges the decisions.

Cllr Glenn Simpson offered support to County Cllr Anne Dale and stated that the fact that Northumberland had no planning strategy in place opened the door for developers, claiming this was simply 'another bad decision being followed through'. Cllr Glenn Simpson also agreed that dissolving Arch was a waste of time as the only change appeared to be the name above the door.

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Cllr Jennifer McGee questioned County Cllr Anne Dale about the actual cost of the now disbanded scheme for a new County Hall in Ashington, asking specifically if the figure was £80m as people had been led to believe. County Cllr Anne Dale confirmed that the cost to build the new County Hall came in at £32m, a figure scrutinised by Auditors.

Cllr Chris Cuthbert welcomed the news about the pelican crossing in Mickley but advised that NCC had failed to update the interactive traffic management system on-line and there was no warning about the disruption/traffic lights.

Following a question from Cllr Chris Cuthbert about the school safety bollards scheme, County Cllr Anne Dale confirmed that weather permitting the work would commence on completion of the work to move the bus shelter and then install the pelican crossing.

Following a question from Cllr Chris Cuthbert about nuisance parking on amenity land outside numbers 83-87 Riding Dene, County Cllr Anne Dale advised that the landowner had not yet responded. Cllr Chris Cuthbert requested that the Town Council is kept updated.

1718/101 Humbles Wood Play Area

Resident of Humbles Wood, Mr Joseph Martin addressed the council with concerns about the scale and location of the new play structure at Humbles Wood.

Mr Joseph Martin who has lived at Humbles Wood for 4 years described that he was given to understand that a small toddler play area would be installed to the lower part of the open space, however, he arrived home from work on Wednesday 22nd November to find the 15ft structure nowhere near where it should be and he could not believe that it had been constructed without any consultation with residents.

Mr Joseph Martin read from the Town Council minutes in August 2015 where the Town Council rejected the natural toddler play feature put forward by Gentoo and in December 2015 agreed to meet with Gentoo to discuss moving forward and although it was suggested that consultation should be carried out, that this was not taken forward.

Cllr Eileen Burt agreed that the Town Council had not approved of the original plans for a natural toddler play feature but she could not recall agreeing to the scheme installed. Cllr Jennifer McGee corrected Cllr Eileen Burt that the Town Council agreed the present scheme in April 2017.

Cllr Graham Robinson agreed with the comments made by Mr Joseph Martin and as a resident now but not a Cllr at that time he could not see why the Town Council would think that the scheme installed represented less of a risk of vandalism and lifespan when both are made of the same material. Cllr Graham Robinson added that the open space was previously used recreationally by children and now this is not possible due to the spacing of large pieces of play equipment.

Cllr Russ Greig questioned whether planning permission has been sought for the play feature and asked if Mr Joseph Martin had spoken with Gentoo. Mr Joseph Martin responded that he had spoken with David Thomas (Gentoo) and to contractors, asking them to stop work; he was told that he would be removed by police if he obstructed the work being carried out.

Cllr Chris Cuthbert asked Mr Joseph Martin if he was against a play feature, his response was that he was fully supportive of a toddler play feature where young children would attend supervised, but not

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of the play feature installed that will attract groups of unsupervised older children. Mr Joseph Martin added that the A-Frame was his main concern due to it overlooking his property.

Cllr Jennifer McGee proposed that the Town Council contact Gentoo and ask for a meeting in respect of the installed play equipment. Cllr Jennifer McGee went on to say that Gentoo had come forward with a natural toddler play feature initially, but that as the Town Council would ultimately become responsible for its maintenance, they asked for something more robust and the alternative was preferred. Cllr Jennifer McGee stated that although the Town Council supported the installed design, she was surprised how near to properties it had been located.

Cllr Tracy Gilmore asked what other equipment was installed. Mr Joseph Martin described the play equipment and that it was well spaced out; Cllr Tracy Gilmore responded that it was unusual not to have play equipment together.

Cllr Chris Cuthbert stated that she was concerned that amenity land had been lost.

Cllr Gerry Price summarised that the A-Frame appeared to be presenting the most concern and the answer may be to move it.

Cllr Glenn Simpson advised that by definition the layout would determine that the structure would be outside someone's property regardless where it was moved, and that there were no complaints by members previously, however, Cllr Glenn Simpson agreed that it was naïve of the Town Council not to seek consultation.

Cllr Gerry Price advised Mr Joseph Martin that a resolution may require some patience as it may take some time to get the developer to respond but the Council would aim for the sooner the better.

Cllr Jennifer McGee proposed that the council contact NCC Planning to ask for details of the planning application and whether there was an amendment.

It was AGREED to request a meeting with Gentoo and to contact NCC Planning with regards to the play feature at Humbles Wood.

Proposed: Cllr Jennifer McGee

Seconded: Cllr Eileen Burt

1718/0102 Accounts

a) Monthly Bank Reconciliations

It was AGREED to receive statements from 10th October – 9th November 2017

Proposed: Cllr Eileen Burt

Seconded: Cllr Andy Gill

b) Statement of Expenditure from 1st April 2017 – 23rd November 2017

It was AGREED to receive statement

Proposed: Cllr Eileen Burt

Seconded: Cllr Andy Gill

c) **It was AGREED** to endorse the accounts paid since the October meeting and to authorise the accounts to be paid which have been tabled

Proposed: Cllr Eileen Burt

Seconded: Cllr Andy Gill

1718/103 Television License Refund Scheme

Cllr Gerry Price asked the administrator to explain why there was a proposal to reduce the times at which the TVLS Refund can be claimed.

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The administrator described that recently there have been a number of disgruntled residents who have not been able to collect their refund as the Town Council office was unattended, either due to meetings or during lunchtime. The administrator added that the person who received the negative feedback was Claire from Karbon Homes and as well as feeling that this was not fair to Claire, it was also not fair to those residents who have made 2 or 3 trips to the library and still not been refunded. Therefore, it is suggested that the days and hours are reduced so that there is more likely to be someone available. The administrator concluded that the days and times suggested were Tuesday and Thursday as Anne is in the office and Friday as this is a popular choice as residents claim their refund ready for the weekend.

Cllr Russ Greig supported the suggestion to reduce the hours and commented that when he had been in the office there were often 2 or 3 consecutive interruptions.

Cllr Graham Robinson recommended that the window should be reduced further. Cllr Andy Gill suggested the whole scheme needed to be reviewed.

With respect to review the entire scheme, Cllr Gerry Price offered that this was a separate budget discussion but Cllr Gill was perfectly entitled to put it forward.

Cllr Chris Cuthbert suggested that rather than having different times on different days that there should be a restricted time every day so that residents could more easily remember when the refund is available.

Cllr Eileen Burt supported fixing the hours.

Cllr Carol Stephenson supported the availability put forward by the administrator as this was based on knowledge.

It was AGREED at 9 in favour to change the availability of TVLS refunds from the 1st January 2018.

1718/104 2018/19 Budget

It was AGREED that Cllrs should think about anything they wish to be considered in the budget and feed through to the office for consideration in the draft agenda put forward by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council and Planning, Contract and Works Committee in January 2018.

Cllr Eileen Burt suggested that in view of the work carried out by Cllr Russ Greig, that additional funds should certainly be added to this budget heading. Additionally, Cllr Eileen Burt reminded the meeting that there is a request for a bus shelter at the turning into Eltringham. Cllr Ken Stow agreed to look into this.

1718/105 Prudhoe Neighbourhood Management

It was AGREED to receive the report of the meeting.

Proposed: Cllr Eileen Burt

Seconded: Cllr Glenn Simpson

Cllr Russ Greig advised that following his concern about the issue of run-off and silt, the Environment Agency has attended and inspected the site and they have asked for remedial work to be carried out; Gentoo has 2 weeks to comply.

Cllr Andy Gill wondered about the obstructive hedge on South Road. County Cllr Ken Stow said he would chase this up with County Cllr Gordon Stewart.

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Cllr Tracy Gilmore asked for clarification on whether owners had to be 'caught in the act' in order to be fined for dog fouling. It was confirmed that this was the case, however warning letters can be issued where intelligence is given.

1718/106 Events Group Meeting

It was **AGREED** to receive the report of the Events Group meeting held on 13th November 2017.

Cllr Jennifer McGee celebrated the success of the Christmas Lights Switch-On and thanked the administrator for doing a fantastic job. Cllr Jennifer McGee proposed that thank you letters be sent to all those who helped on the night.

Finally, Cllr Jennifer McGee reported that the Events Group would be requesting a budget of £10,000 for 2018-19.

1718/107 Prudhoe Town Council Young People's Forum

A verbal report of the meeting held on 15th November 2017 was given by Cllr Gerry Price with a note that the full minutes would be issued by Carol Quinn (NCC).

Cllr Gerry Price advised that a very concerning issue was raised at the Young People's Forum regarding sexual exploitation of young people. Cllrs Russ Greig and Jennifer McGee both felt it important that this matter was not swept under the carpet and that it is dealt with appropriately.

Cllr Jennifer McGee stated that she was alarmed at the level and type of negative behaviour in the town, stating that someone needs to get a grip on it. Cllr Jennifer McGee added that she was aware that the numbers of police were greatly reduced and there may be lots going on behind the scenes but the issues need to be sorted, especially when you hear news of young people running over the tops of cars in Waterworld car park.

Cllr Gerry Price responded that this was not an action for the Town Council as the matter had been handed over to the appropriate authorities.

Cllr Russ Greig stated that this was a local authority safeguarding issue and the Town Council should not sit back and let these things happen, adding that if young teenagers are running around late at night action should be taken. Cllr Russ Greig reported that this was a regular weekday occurrence at Waterworld.

Cllr Tracy Gilmore commented that if something was not done soon, Prudhoe would end up as a town with shutters on all shop windows as traders become fearful of having their windows put out.

Cllr Andy Gill stated that he had spoken with Inspector Pam Bridges and there were interventions in the pipeline.

Cllr Gerry Price advised that there was an email from Inspector Pam Bridges in correspondence but that it did not offer any strategies and this was perhaps the way forward.

1718/108 Grant Aid 2018/19

It was **AGREED** that Cllrs Russ Greig, Angie Scott, Tracy Gilmore and Andy Gill would look at Grant Aid requests in detail and make recommendations to the January budget meeting.

1718/109 Reports from outside bodies

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Town Twinning - It was AGREED to receive the report and note the dates.

Prudhoe Community Partnership – Cllr Eileen Burt reported that George Hepburn had provided a report of current business with the Grant Aid application. With respect the jointly funded feasibility study of Prudhoe East Youth Centre, Cllr Eileen Burt advised that the first draft of the report would be received in an open meeting with Prudhoe Community Partnership and Prudhoe Town Council on Wednesday 6th December at 7:00 pm and that she would chair that meeting.

Community Transport Group – It was AGREED to receive the report of the meeting held on 18th October 2017. Cllr Graham Robinson stated that he wished did not give apologies but rather declined to attend the meeting and he wished this to be known and minuted. Cllr Eileen Burt commented that she was aware that publicity for the 686 service has been circulated and that efforts would be made to better publicise the ADAPT service.

Essity Community Forum – Cllr Chris Cuthbert attended the meeting and advised that in view of the time she would happily send this out to Cllrs. **This was AGREED.**

East Tynedale Forum – Cllr Chris Cuthbert attended the meeting and advised that in view of the time she would happily send this out to Cllrs. **This was AGREED.**

1718/110 Correspondence and Publications

Correspondence

1. A thank you card from Barclays, Prudhoe for the efforts and time of the Town Council in decorating the Town. From Jean, Wendy, Lizzie and Joanne (27th October 2017). **It was AGREED** to receive the card with pleasure.
2. Mickley Senior Citizens Treat, a letter explaining that the treat has ceased in Mickley. The letter was handed over along with a refund of the £250 funding awarded by the Town Council for the 2017 Treat. **It was AGREED** that as Mickley residents have been invited to and are attending the Prudhoe Aged People's Treat that the £250 pledged should be re-issued accordingly.
3. Royal British Legion Silent Soldier Campaign. **It was AGREED** that this should be placed on a future meeting.
4. Gateshead Council Local Plan Part 3. The online consultation was noted.
5. Citizens Advice Northumberland, 22nd November 2017. **It was AGREED** to receive the 'holding' letter and look forward to a fuller response from the new Chief Executive once settled in.
6. Gentoo Homes, 24th November 2017. **It was AGREED** to send the letter of response to the issues raised regarding the continued use of Moor Road to all Cllrs as well as noting that the issues were also discussed and recorded in the report of the Prudhoe Neighbourhood Management Committee.
7. Northumberland County Council, Neighbourhood Planning Update, November 2017.
RECEIVE
8. Inspector Pam Bridges, email update on Youth ASB and Damage in Prudhoe, 29th November 2017. **It was AGREED** to forward the email to all Cllrs.

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Publications

1. Tynedale Hospice at Home, Autumn Newslink.
2. Clerks and Councils Direct, November 2017.
3. Campaign to Protect Rural England, North East Newsletter, Autumn 2017.
4. The Clerk, SLCC, November 2017.
5. L'Evolution, Mity-Mory, November 2017.
6. War Memorials Trust Bulletin.
7. NAMM News October 2017
8. Allotment & Leisure Gardener, Issue 2, 2017.

It was AGREED to receive the tabled publications.

It was AGREED to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to go on beyond 9:00 pm

Proposed: Cllr Jennifer McGee

Seconded: Cllr Glenn Simpson

It was AGREED 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:-

1718/111 CONFIDENTIAL Minutes of the Human Resources Committee Meeting, held on 20th October 2017

It was AGREED to receive the minutes

Proposed: Cllr Eileen Burt

Seconded: Cllr Chris Cuthbert

1718/112 CONFIDENTIAL

It was AGREED to approve that an external professional act in the interest of the Council, within agreed parameters, on a confidential matter and that any resolution is brought back to the full council to agree before being executed.

Proposed: Cllr Eileen Burt

Seconded: Cllr Chris Cuthbert

1718/113 CONFIDENTIAL Youth Service Meeting Report

It was AGREED to receive the report of the Youth Service meeting, held on 15th November 2017

Cllr Eileen Burt stated that the Town Council need to take action in respect of the youth service offer and instead of waiting for West Northumberland Youth Service to decide what they are able to offer and therefore apply for grant aid for, that the Council should take this to a higher level.

Cllr Jennifer McGee expressed disappointment that it now appeared that West Northumberland Youth Service did not want the financial support of the Town Council and that this was surprising as she believed they need all the money they can get.

Cllr Russ Greig stated that governance and accountability were of prime importance for the Town Council and for the Youth Service and although a number of questions were asked of the September Newsletter, nothing has been received and nothing again in October. Cllr Russ Greig agreed with Cllr Eileen Burt that the Town Council should escalate questions to a higher level.

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Cllr Glenn Simpson commented that funding streams are harder to achieve and with the public sector looking so bleak it was difficult to understand why West Northumberland Youth Service did not wish to apply for Grant Aid from the Town Council to support activities in Prudhoe. Cllr Glenn Simpson added that he would not rule out a third-party provider.

Cllr Angie Scott stated that if West Northumberland Youth Service were not interested in seeking funding from the Town Council, then that funding could be used to bring an alternative provider in to provide services much needed in the town or to create Prudhoe Youth Initiative. Cllr Angie Scott concluded that presently the young people of Prudhoe are being failed.

Cllr Gerry Price explained that the feasibility study of Prudhoe East Centre was not yet complete and may offer solutions. Cllr Eileen Burt reminded Cllr Gerry Price and the meeting that the feasibility study related to the Prudhoe East Building, not the Youth Service.

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