

PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning, Contract and Works Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre, Front Street, Prudhoe at 7:00pm on Wednesday 14th January 2015

PRESENT Cllr Mrs J McGee (Chair), Cllr Mrs E Burt, Cllr Mrs N McGee, Cllr B Futers, Cllr A Gill, Cllr G McCreedy, Cllr G Price, Cllr G Simpson (part of meeting)

In attendance: R Whinney (Clerk)

1415/1056 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert, County Cllr Mrs A Dale

1415/1057 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST None

1415/1058 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING CONTRACT & WORKS COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2014

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

Proposed: Cllr B Futers

Seconded: Cllr G McCreedy

Cllr G Simpson arrived at this point.

1415/1059 MATTERS ARISING. None

1415/1060 PLANNING MATTERS

1. Planning applications considered

General - West Wylam Ward

Planning Ref. 14/04203/FUL

Proposal: Internal alterations & construction of access platform to storeroom

Location: J&C Stores (NISA), West Wylam Drive, West Wylam, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5ES

Applicant: Mr Hardial Jagpal, (address given as Biverfield Road, West Wylam NE42 5ER)

Response deadline: 12 January 2015

SUPPORT

Prudhoe West & Halfway Ward

Ref. 14/04049/FUL

Proposal: Conversion of semi-detached house into two 2-bedroomed properties

Location: 28 West Road, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 6HP

Applicant: Mr Stephen Jefferson, 8 Paddock Wood, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5BJ

Response deadline: 13 January 2015

OBJECTION on the grounds that the plans were not clear, especially in relation to the location of the proposed car parking space(s). The Committee could not establish where these spaces were located on the development site plan supplied with the application.

Mickley Ward

Ref. 14/03134/FUL

Proposal: Construction of stone porch leading from rear entrance of house

Location: 3 Cherryburn Cottages, Mickley, Stocksfield, Northumberland NE43 7DB

Applicant: Mr Keith Hamilton (address as above)

Response deadline: 26 January 2015

SUPPORT

General – Castlefields & Low Prudhoe Ward

Planning Ref. 14/04205/FUL

Proposal: Conversion of 2 aggregate bays to 2 lock ups

Location: Shed 7, off Princess Way, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 6NP

Applicant: Mr Shaun Holliday, 1 Beaumont Cottages, West Road, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 6RE

Response deadline: 27 January 2015

SUPPORT

2. Decisions of the Planning Authority in respect of planning applications

West Wylam Ward

Ref. 14/03246/FUL

Proposal: To re-site a pre-fabricated portakabin

Location: Eastwoods Farm, Eastwood Villas, West Wylam, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5NQ

Applicant: Mr John Kenneth Pringle, (address as above)

Response deadline: 14 November 2014

Northumberland County Council decided to GRANT permission

[The Council had responded SUPPORTING the application]

Prudhoe Hall Ward

Ref. 14/02842/FUL

Proposal: Extension consisting of ground floor utility and garage, first floor bedroom and en-suite and a garage built in garden

Location: 75 Park Lane, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5LW

Applicant: Mr Lindsay Smith, (address as above)

Response deadline: 5 October 2014

Northumberland County Council decided to GRANT permission

[The Council had responded OBJECTING to the application on two occasions, with regard to the creation of an apparent new vehicular access to Moor Road.]

Prudhoe Hall Ward

Planning Ref. 14/03683/FUL

Proposal: Single storey extension to gable and front elevation

Location: 27 Park Avenue, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5BB

Applicant: Mr David Dixon, (address as above)

Response deadline: 2 December 2014

Northumberland County Council decided to GRANT permission

[The Council had responded SUPPORTING the application]

The notifications were received. Cllr Mrs E Burt stated that she felt that the Council would be disappointed at the decision of the Planning Authority in respect of the application ref. 14/02842/FUL. She reminded the meeting that the Council was entitled to make representations when applications were considered by the Area Planning Committee, in the event that it had strong views regarding an application, as in this case where it had made a strong objection citing road safety concerns.

3. Notice of additional Planning Application

Cllr Mrs J McGee notified the meeting that the following applications, in respect of the anticipated re-development of the residue of the former Prudhoe Hospital site, had been received by the Council on Monday 12 January:

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

Location: Former Prudhoe Hospital, Prudhoe Hospital Drive, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5NT

Applicant: Gentoo Homes / Homes & Communities Agency, Akeler House, Emperor Way, Doxford International Business Park, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear SR3 3XR

Response deadline: 30 January 2015

General – Prudhoe Hall Ward

Ref. 14/04061/LBC

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for Conversion of Prudhoe Hall and associated buildings to provide 12 dwellings (Use class C3), and improvement works to the Walled Garden

Location: Former Prudhoe Hospital, Prudhoe Hospital Drive, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5NT

Applicant: Gentoo Homes / Homes & Communities Agency, Akeler House, Emperor Way, Doxford International Business Park, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear SR3 3XR

Response deadline: 30 January 2015

Cllr Mrs McGee stated that these very important applications had not been brought before this meeting for consideration, as a period of two days would have allowed insufficient time for the relevant documents to be scrutinised. Following a brief discussion, the Clerk was requested to contact the Planning Authority to ascertain if it would be in order for the Council to notify its response to these applications following the February meeting of the Committee; it was felt that the agenda for the January Budget / Ordinary Meeting was already sufficiently burdened with business.

Cllr B Futers produced the notifications of the applications in respect of the former Hospital site which he had received as a nearby resident. He said that it was imperative for residents without access to a computer to be able to view the planning documentation in Prudhoe, and not have to travel to Hexham as suggested in the residents' letters. Agreeing, Cllr Mrs J McGee noted that recent public consultation exercises at the Spetchells Centre, mounted on behalf of the developers, had not offered the opportunity to study detailed infrastructural material, which would in the past have been supplied to the Library, and she suggested that the Council might wish to raise concerns as described by Cllr Futers.

Noting that these applications concerned a very significant development for the town, **it was AGREED** to contact NCC Development Control to raise the concerns articulated by Cllr Futers.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr B Futers

It was also agreed that a laptop and overhead projector should be used when the applications were finally considered by the Council.

1415/1061 EDGEWELL CEMETERIES

The Clerk reported that solicitors had been instructed to proceed with the work to register the Council's claim to the ownership of the Old Cemetery. He noted that the evidence, including documents of title, up to 1946, supplemented by the Town Council minutes from 1973-75, were considered to provide strong justification in support of the Council's claim to the ownership of the freehold. Responding to Cllr Mrs E Burt, Cllr A Gill said that former councillor Mr W Garrett had told him that the title to the Old Cemetery *had* been transferred to the Town Council at some stage after the Council had come into being.

Cllr A Gill summarised the remainder of the report of the recent meeting of the Cemetery & Memorial Sub-Committee, as follows:

- Stability testing of memorials: the revised reports, including the reasons for test failures, had yet to be received from NCC, and would be chased. Until the reasons for test failures were known, the Council could not advise grave owners accordingly.
- Roadworks, Old Cemetery: the contractor had yet to arrange for the joint between the bullnose kerb and the roadway to be covered with pitch to seal it in place, as previously agreed. This would be chased.
- Trees in Old Cemetery – three quotations had been sought, and two received to date, for the removal of the five Leyland cypress trees remaining in the centre of the Old Cemetery. The anticipated cost for the removal of the trees was under £500. Cllr Gill explained that the work was proposed because, following requests for action by a grave owner, it had been established that the tree roots were causing damage to nearby graves.
- Hedge / tree pruning in New Cemetery – the Council’s contractor had been requested to quote for beech hedging to plug the remaining gaps on the east side of the cemetery. Most of these gaps had been left by the removal of a long-established spoil heap on the east boundary.
- Bins in New Cemetery – the installation of these was being arranged.
- The work records were being supplied regularly, and it appeared that more work was being done in the cemeteries. Cllr Gill noted that the council had received a letter from a grave owner who was very grateful for work carried out to improve the appearance of his brother’s resting place.
- The Cemetery group was working on a proposal to replace the fence below the former chapel. A complaint had been received from a householder in respect of the hedge there, and work on the hedge had revealed the poor condition of the fence. Cllr Gill noted that the group had agreed that it would be important to ensure that house-owners were alerted to the Council’s proposals.
- In respect of the proposed bed in the New Cemetery, for which the meeting was about to consider a proposal, Cllr Gill noted that the group had decided to recommend that a flat bed be constructed instead of a sloping one. The Clerk confirmed that the current cemetery budget contained the funds to pay for the work if it was agreed to proceed.

The report was received.

1415/1062 HIGHFIELD PARK: PLAY PROVISION

Cllr Mrs J McGee reported that the group of councillors convened to work on this issue had concluded that most of the play equipment ought to be replaced. She stressed that the meeting was not being asked to decide on a preferred proposal, although the proposed designs were available for inspection at the meeting. She noted that the group had found that the play equipment was showing its age, with repairs being required with increasing frequency, and with the play features becoming outdated. She presented the report of the meeting of the group held on 10 December 2014, noting that, in particular:

- The group had agreed that consultation with young people was essential to the delivery of the project.
- The funding sources for the project were considered to be as follows (1) the town council budget (2) County councillors’ small schemes allowances (capital funding only) (3) Grant funding (capital funding only). If the Council agreed to proceed with the project, the first application should be to NCC’s Housing Developer Fund for monies provided through developers’ section 106 contributions. It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel to consider such applications was expected to take place in February 2015. A successful application here could serve to support applications to other schemes.
- Cllr Mrs McGee and the Clerk had studied the document “A Guide to Parish and Town Council Borrowing in England”, issued (April 2013) by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the National Association of Local Councils. As a result, the group had agreed that it was not in favour of recommending that approval to borrow funds should be sought until all other options had been explored.

Cllr Mrs McGee added that the group had also agreed that it was in favour of an agreed project being delivered in one year rather than spread out over a longer period.

Cllr G McCreedy agreed with Cllr Mrs McGee regarding any phasing of the project, stating that it would cost the Council more if spread out over two or three years; Cllr Mrs McGee noted that the play specialists had indicated that phasing would increase costs with respect to delivery, and the supply of site facilities and equipment. Cllr A Gill noted that, if the other play areas were being taken on, there would be increases in the precept further down the line when their equipment was being replaced: he felt that these increases would be larger if this project was phased.

Cllr Mrs E Burt suggested that the project could easily be phased over two to three financial years, saying that it could be arranged to be carried out at the end of one financial year and the start of the next. She noted that when she and Cllr McCreedy had surveyed all of the NCC play areas several years back, the Castle Dene site (expected to be progressed in the near future) had been the one most in need of attention. Agreeing, Cllr G Simpson suggested that the lead time of the project would likely be delayed as a result of public consultation, so that the work could well be spread over two years. He felt that there was plenty of work still to be done, and that it would be best to wait until the finance was in place before proceeding.

Cllr Mrs McGee suggested that approximately half of the funding for the project could be allocated in the budget for 2015-16. Additional support *could* be drawn from the following: the Council's own asset reserve fund; a (hopefully successful) application for section 106 funding; other grant funding sources; and funding from the town's county councillors' small schemes allocations. She added that once this project had been carried through, funding could be held at the same level to support work to the other play sites requiring investment. Concluding the discussion, Cllr B Futers suggested that large local companies could be approached for possible support.

It was agreed to receive the report.

1415/1063 APPEARANCE OF FRONT STREET

Cllr G McCreedy stated that the management at the 'Cash 4 Clothes' premises had been trying "to get something done" about the boarded-up window in the shop-front, but that "head office was not prepared to do this". Cllr McCreedy said that raising this issue was about trying to tidy up Front Street, because problems like this did not contribute to the appearance of the street. Responding, Cllr Mrs E Burt agreed the shop-front looked unsightly, but said that she was uncomfortable about highlighting this one problem, as there were other properties on Front Street that were also not meeting expectations. She was also unhappy at the prospect of making formal approaches to the businesses concerned. She noted that other premises had also done nothing to improve their appearance since last year, a view with which Cllr A Gill agreed. Cllr G Price suggested making an approach to each business simply enquiring as to their intentions.

Summing up the discussion, Cllr Mrs J McGee suggested revisiting the report compiled by the Street Scene Working Group in 2014 and, where it was found that nothing had been done, approaching the businesses to ask if they could do something about the appearance of their premises in order to help improve the town's appearance.

It was AGREED to contact the businesses identified in the 2014 report, following the approach suggested by Cllr Mrs J McGee.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr Mrs N McGee

It was resolved 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.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

1415/1064 EDGEWELL CEMETERIES

The revised quotation from Hollybush Landscaping was tabled.

It was AGREED to approve, separately, the following:

(1) The construction of a floral bed feature in the New Cemetery, opposite the entrance, with dimensions 6 metres by 2.4 metres, defined all round by a 0.3 metre high cemented stone wall, filled with fresh topsoil and prepared for planting, at a cost totalling £1480;

(2) The supply and planting of beech hedging (90 plants) to fill remaining gaps at the east boundary of the New Cemetery, at a cost totalling £320;

(3) To approve *in principle*, subject to the necessary allocation of funds from the budget for 2015-16, the supply, planting and maintenance of the bed. The quoted sums were: summer bedding - £288; winter / spring bedding - £190.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr B Futers

END OF MEETING